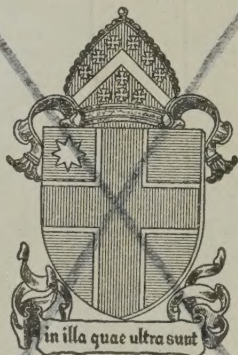


LESSONS ON THE WAY

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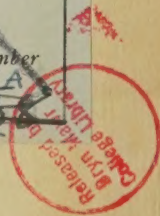
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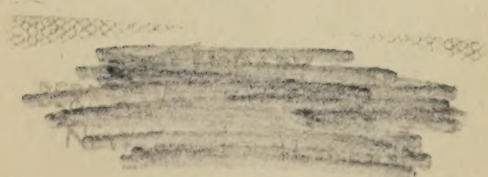
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PREFACE

“The way is the way and there is an end.”

Pilgrim's Progress

WE need not repeat here the Preface and Preliminary Note of the first Volume ; but one or two points may be worth mentioning.

The Lessons are for teachers of all sorts, and even for the general reader. For teaching purposes it is supposed that the hearers take notes, and afterwards hand in either short written Essays, or the Notes themselves,—for correction, I would say, but not for the awarding of competitive marks, for I should prefer the only reward to be the reading aloud of the best Essay, or the best Notes, as the case may be.

It will be a great help if the Title and Points are written out on a black-board. There is no better training, both for the teacher and his hearers, than to tabulate thought in this way. If a black-board cannot be managed (though really it always can be managed, even in church), then the Title and Points must be carefully spelt out.

The thirty Lessons are meant to last a year, because there are necessary interruptions, due to holidays, festivals and special subjects ; also because a Revision every five or six Sundays or so is assumed (as is explained in the first Volume and in Lesson 41). There is another reason : for some audiences it will be best to divide some of the Lessons into two. It is also a good plan now and then to vary the order by having some new feature (e.g. a hymn-practice) and to give a much shorter lesson than usual. In some cases, a single Point will make a useful short lesson, and some Points deal with subjects of such importance (e.g. Lesson 36, Pt. 3 ; L. 37, Pt. 4 ; L. 43, Pts. 3, 4 ; L. 55, Pt. 5) that they ought either to be repeated or taken separately. Some

of the tables (e.g. Lesson 39, Pt. 1 ; L. 60) also make useful extra Lessons.

The Lessons can of course be adapted for various ages—every teacher knows his own audience—but they are written out with a well-educated audience in view, of between fourteen and sixteen years. I myself have delivered most of them also to adult educated audiences ; and have adapted some for children as young as six and seven. But the Lessons do assume that the hearers have already had some elementary instruction in the Life of Christ.

My ideal would be something like this : 1. Preparatory School, or Lower Standards, or Little Catechism : Elementary course on the Life of Christ. 2. Public School, Higher Standards, or Big Catechism : The subjects to be covered in the five Volumes of *Lessons on the Way*. 3. Highest Forms, Bible Classes (to be called " Study Classes "), etc. : Advanced course on the Life and Teaching of Christ. It is perhaps dangerous to make further proposals, but it may be suggested that the Epistles, which are commentaries on the teaching of Christ, should not be attempted till that teaching is well understood, and that the Acts of the Apostles are really the first chapter of the history of Christendom (which is a greater thing than what is called Church History), and should be followed by lectures on later periods and personalities. There is enough subject-matter for a life-time here : one could wish indeed that a custom would grow up of having Sunday evening lectures for the general public on the Life of Christ, the theology of the Catechism, the teaching of the Apostles, the Bible generally, and Christian history.

The subject-matter of this volume is more difficult and important, more misunderstood and more infected by controversy than that of the first. The Publishing Committee of the S.P.C.K. has not interfered with the expression of my convictions, and the responsibility for those convictions and for that expression is my own : every teacher must follow his own conscience, and use his own judgment in approving or rejecting them. I believe that the future of religion depends, under God, on the complete frankness of its teachers, and on their entire devotion to truth. It is our duty always, and

very specially to-day, not to obscure the issues by a half-defence of ethically primitive or of scientifically pre-Copernican ideas, nor merely to ignore such ideas when they still underlie so much misapprehension of theology. We have to be simple, keeping nothing back, bending nothing to base uses, but speaking with directness and force, as the servants of that truth which makes men bold because it makes them free. Then theology will be relieved from its long and paralysing defensive, and will enjoy the initiative again.

LESSONS ON THE WAY

31

THE NEED OF A CREED

Here, having finished and Revised Part I of the Catechism, we begin Part II, the Christian Creed.

I.—GROWTH OF THE TWO CREEDS

THE whole of Part II is about the Christian Creed. The word “creed” comes from the Latin *Credo*, which means “I believe”—the first two words of the two creeds. Let us begin by trying to answer the question why it is a good thing to have a fixed form of belief. We had to say something about all this in Lesson 26. Then we said that there were two Creeds, (1) The Apostles’ Creed, which is the baptism-creed in the Western Churches; (2) The Nicene Creed, which is not quite so simple, and is said at the Holy Communion. In the Eastern Churches (Greece, Russia, Serbia, etc.) they only use the Nicene Creed. There is a third profession of belief “commonly called” (as the Prayer Book puts it) “the Athanasian Creed”; but it is not really a creed; so it ought to be called the Athanasian *Hymn*. But then it was not written by Athanasius. So, perhaps, it ought really to be called the Gaulish Canticle or French Hymn, or something like that; for it was probably written in South Gaul (France) about the year 450.

Creeds began by people making a declaration of their belief when they became Christians and were baptized. By about the year 150 they used the Apostles’ Creed, very nearly as it is now [140–150 is *Harnack’s date*]. But

it was altered a little as time went on ; and it was not till the seventh and eighth centuries that it was settled just as we have it [*" Maker of heaven and earth " is rare before the eighth cent.*]. It was not till the Reformation in the sixteenth century that the Creed was put into Mattins and Evensong. [From Anglo-Saxon times the Apostles' Creed was said at Prime and Compline, but not aloud.]

All this shows us that the Church did not think the Creeds so perfect that they could never be altered. On the contrary, they *were* altered ; and it is quite possible that they might be altered again. Only, it would not do for one part of the Church (such as the Church of England) to alter a creed, without the rest of the Church agreeing. So, while the Church is divided, even the slightest alteration is really impossible. You could alter the Creeds—of course anyone could—but then they would cease to be Catholic Creeds, as we shall see.

II.—CAN THEY BE ALTERED ?

It is quite important to remember all this ; because people often criticise the Creeds at the present day, and say they are old-fashioned, and ought to be improved. They are ancient, of course, but that is not a bad thing : it is good that we should have the same belief as the early Christians had. Very old things—buildings or statues, for instance—are generally precious and fine ; they are among the finest things in the world. We shouldn't make them just the same to-day ; but then we *couldn't*. And we generally make them not nearly so good. So we go on using the old, and are thankful to have them. It is like that with great ancient writings.

Only the whole Church could have power to alter a creed ; for the Creeds are *catholic*, that is, they belong to the whole Church. If the different parts of the Church were united to-day, it would be a splendid thing. They could then have again a General Council, that is, a Parliament of all the Churches. But yet, if a Council tried at once to improve the Creeds it would probably make a mess of the job. The whole Church to-day would not, I am afraid, be so fit to make a creed as the Church was when it was undivided a thousand years ago.

III.—INADEQUATE

Well, then, I think we have a sound answer to those who say that the Creeds are old-fashioned. They *are* : and so is Westminster Abbey, and S. Sofia, in Constantinople (which is nearly 1,400 years old) and the Parthenon at Athens (which is about a thousand years older).

But, to be fair (and we *must* always be fair), we ought to add that there *is* some imperfection, as well as much excellence, in an ancient thing. The Parthenon is a glorious temple (though it is in ruins), but it would not make a good church for our purposes to-day ; nor would the Colosseum at Rome make a suitable theatre for us. Plato or Shakespeare would certainly make corrections in their books if they were publishing them again to-day.

The Creeds, then, *could* not be perfect—if anything can, in this mortal world ! In any case they cannot possibly mean exactly the same to us as they did to the people who made them. This is quite certain, because words have changed their meaning. And also because our ways of thinking (our philosophy) have changed. For instance : people used to think that “ the resurrection of the body ” meant that at the last day the dead would walk out of their graves. That seems childish to us : but we believe more than ever in the Resurrection of the Body—to us it means that our earthly bodies will perish, but that we shall become spiritual beings, with glorious new spiritual bodies, as S. Paul said.

So I have given you the word “ Inadequate.” If you had a pudding that weighed 40 lb., but all the weights you could collect came to 39 lb. 8 oz., those weights would be inadequate.

If the wisest men in the world made the Creeds to-day as perfect as they possibly could, every important word in those Creeds would still be inadequate. Why ? It is quite simple : because we have to use human language to describe heavenly things. Only an angel-language would do that. The best and truest thing you can say about God is that he is the Father Almighty. But of course even the beautiful word “ Father ” is inadequate, and still more so is “ almighty.” God is something far more wonderful and good and loving than any father. You would see this at once if I were to alter the word

“father” to “mother” in the Creed. Inadequate, you would say! Yes, but it would be as true, and indeed it would give the idea of God’s creative power, and his tenderness and care, even better than “father.”

IV.—PICTURES

Now we are on strong ground. We now have a reason which will always hold good for believing in the Creed. The Creed is a picture of religious truth. It is not more than a picture—or a photograph if you like. Now, if you look at a photograph of a friend, you may say “How like!” or “How very like!” But it is not more than that. It misses something. It is always inadequate. Yet, if that friend has died, how glad you are to have the picture! How dreadful it would be to have nothing to remember him by! This picture really does describe him, it really brings him back to me, I can almost see him as he actually was. In my tears of sorrow, I can kiss it, as I remember him.

The Creed is a picture—not of God (we cannot even imagine *that* picture), but of what God’s nature is like, of what He has done in Christ, and still does in the Holy Spirit. Our godparents could not really promise that we should think exactly the same as they did, or as anyone else did. If the promise to believe all the articles of the Christian faith meant that, it could not be true, it would be absurd. But it did mean that they would teach us this Faith, and that we should begin our thinking lives with the acceptance of the Creed.

It is as if they had given us a picture, and we stuck it on the mantelpiece and said, “That is what I will keep before me, as the best thing to go by.” Or, as if, in order to show you what being born an Englishman (*or an American*) means, they had given you the map of the British Empire [*or of the U.S.A., as the case may be*].

V.—IMPORTANCE OF RIGHT BELIEF

Do you remember some time ago [*Lesson 26*] we were saying that many people had become Christians, but had spoilt it all by having the most dreadful and cruel ideas about Christianity? Well, that is why it is so important

to have a good picture of Christianity in the Creed. And we said that it was very important to believe true things. What did we say about the white powder called arsenic? . . . We also said that some people are fond of *adding* things to the simple Creed, and telling us that all these things are necessary to salvation. It is a great help against this to have our Apostles' Creed, a simple and true statement about God and Christ. It is a great protection against evil or foolish ideas about religion.

Also the Creed keeps our ideas from being narrow and running in a corner. It is the *whole* Creed that is our picture. Many people like choosing one or two bits of the Creed. This is what "heresy" means—"taking" or "choosing." They are always more or less wrong. It is often the things we shouldn't naturally choose that are most necessary for us. I expect a burglar thinks burgling all right, and that a drunkard thinks burgling very wrong. Even when we aren't burglars, we all have our peculiarities. Bad actions are really the result of bad ideas—especially ideas about the most important things. If we think that the universe was made by chance, how can we care about law? If we think that God hates men and torments them, how can we love them?

But from good ideas and beliefs good actions follow.

A SIMPLE CREED

I.—NOT THE THIRTY-NINE ARTICLES

“**R**EHEARSE the Articles of thy Belief,” says the Catechism ; and the answer is the Apostles’ Creed. “Rehearse,” of course, means “repeat” : when you rehearse a play you are repeating it. The word “Article” originally meant a little joint [*if they know any Latin* : “*articulus*,” *dim. from* “*artus*,” *joints, or limbs*], such as a knuckle. So it came to mean the parts of a written document : when a boy is apprenticed to a business, the paper that is drawn up and signed is called “the articles of apprenticeship.” In grammar the articles are the little joints *a* and *the* which help to join up nouns to the rest of the sentence. Newspaper articles don’t join anything (they sometimes divide !) : they are just certain parts of the newspaper, and their object generally is to prevent the reader judging the news for himself. The Articles of our Belief are those of the Apostles’ Creed ; and they are really joints. You can think of the Creed as the backbone of that body which is Christ’s Church ; and then the Articles of the Creed are the vertebræ, the joints of the backbone.

Our Articles, then, are not the Thirty-Nine Articles. If you look at the end of the Prayer Book, you will find the Thirty-Nine Articles printed as a separate book at the end. They ought not to be there, because they are not part of the Prayer Book ; and it is not fair, when you want to buy the Prayer Book, to force you to buy something else as well which you don’t want. When the Printers are wiser, this will be altered. Meanwhile they do a lot of harm ; for they make people think that the Church of England is antiquated, especially as these Articles begin with a Royal Declaration by Charles I,

which is a very quaint document ; though it is a fine example of 17th century legal (or regal) English, and contains the very true statement that, in matters of dispute, “ men of all sorts take the Articles of the Church of England to be for *them*.” People in fact did interpret them to suit themselves ; and they still do. [*The above is, of course, not suitable for younger people.*] We may be proud of the Articles as a fine example of English common sense and fairness in the reign of Elizabeth, when people quarrelled about religion in a very mad way. They are extraordinarily wise and good. But the 16th century is not the 20th, and nowadays people don’t like such a lot of dogmas, or laws about what they are to think.

If you asked the first dozen people you met in the street whether they believed in the Thirty-Nine Articles and were truly grateful to Elizabeth and Charles I for their “ Princely Care,” most of them would probably say, “ What are you talking about ? ” As a matter of fact, it is only the clergy who are concerned with the Thirty-Nine Articles ; and they (since the time of Queen Victoria) are only required to “ assent ” to them. These Articles are very comprehensive and sensible ; they have certainly worn much better than any of the other old Confessions of Faith, drawn up in the sixteenth century ; and they still mark the limits of the official teaching of the English Church. But no one can really understand them without much training in theology and history. Some day, I expect, we shall follow the example of our Church in America and not ask even the clergy to assent to them. Anyhow, they are not for you ; because you are *laity*. All you have to do with are the Articles of the Creed—which shortens these Lessons by about five years.

II.—EVERYMAN’S CREED

Well then, we write off the Thirty-Nine Articles. We also write off the so-called Athanasian Creed (which isn’t really by Athanasius) because it isn’t really a creed, as we said last time. (In the Prayer Book you will find it headed “ At Morning Prayer ”—to avoid calling it a creed.) Then there is the Nicene Creed, which was not altogether written at Nicæa, and which is a very fine

creed. And then there is the Apostles' Creed, which wasn't really written by the Apostles, but which is very early and does represent what the Apostles mainly believed about Christ. In the Middle Ages people fancied that each Apostle made one article of this Creed ; and in some old churches there are stained-glass windows showing the twelve Apostles each holding his bit of the Creed. Of course, this is not true ; and to make exactly twelve articles you have to count from "suffered" to "descended into hell" as one, while the next four clauses are counted as four ; the Church and the Communion of Saints, again, are counted together as one, and the resurrection and eternal life also as one. But don't bother about this.

So then, there are two Creeds, one Canticle (Athanasian), and a "Confession" called the Thirty-Nine Articles. You might also include the *Te Deum*, and say these are two (doctrinal) Canticles. The two Creeds are : 1, Apostles', and 2, Nicene (which is sung—when ? . . .). In the Catechism we have only to do with the Apostles' : this is the Creed at Baptism, and also for Confirmation (which is next to the Catechism, and used to be printed with it). It is also the Creed given in the service for people who are ill. It is also used in Church twice a day, or fourteen times a week. It is in fact Everyman's Creed.

III.—NOT THE BIBLE

People used to say, "You must believe in the Bible," and they do still to a great extent. But this is a very vague and difficult thing to say. The word "Bible" does not really mean "a book," but is a plural *biblia*—many books [*neuter plur. in Greek : in Latin the word came to be misunderstood as fem. sing.*] : it is not one voice of God, but many voices about God—many books. And all the books of the O.T. are not about God : the book of Esther, for instance, does not once mention God's name, though of course his providence is implied.

Further, these sixty-six little books form two big books which are quite different. They are . . . ? Yes, thirty-nine books of the O.T., and twenty-seven books of the N.T. (and fourteen more in the Apocrypha). Now if

I were to say, "You must believe the O.T.," I should not be telling you the truth. There are many things in the O.T. which no one who is educated could possibly believe nowadays. [*Most opposition to religion is caused by teachers not having honestly faced this obvious fact in times past.*] Suppose I told you otherwise: When you are older, somebody might come up and say to you: "Do you think a man ought to be stoned to death for picking up sticks on Saturday?" And you would say, "No, I don't." And he would say, "Well, it's in the Bible; and God says it's the right thing to do" [*Num. 15³²⁻³⁶*]. Then you would say that I had been telling you lies. That shows how silly it is to treat the Bible as one solid book.

The truth is that the O.T. is a collection of old Jewish books: they are splendid books, and full of great and true things, but they are not Christian books; and some of them are very much better than others. The Prophets, for instance, were the greatest religious pioneers in the ancient world—they led the way out of cruel and foolish idolatries to a right notion about God. They made Christianity possible: but of course even they never reached the highest and purest truth about God. Only Christ did that. The O.T. was the Bible of the Jews. It still is to-day. Its books were all written before Christ. It is a pre-Christian book; and therefore, in this sense, a non-Christian book. [*If T. feels a slight shock at this truism, it may serve to remind him how great is his responsibility towards those whose turn it is to learn the truth from him. The Church has used the O.T. as a Christian book, because the Word of God, perfectly manifested in Christ, revealed himself partially in it.—Heb. 1¹.*] The earliest Christian book is the New Testament.

IV.—THE CREED OF THE MARTYRS

Even with the N.T. we cannot just say, "You have got to believe this." Some of its books are better than others: John, for instance, is better than Jude; and Mark is a more literal Gospel than Matthew (which is not by S. Matthew, though it contains special matter of the highest value, which may be derived from that apostle. The Gospels are better than the Epistles, because the

words of Christ are better than the words of his followers. It is even rather misleading to say that the N.T. is the Word of God · because the N.T. itself says that Christ is the Word of God [*Jn. 1, etc.*]. It is more correct to say that the Word of God is revealed in the N.T., because the N.T. is the only record we have of God's revelation through Christ.

The Creed is sufficient. The Creed is *in* the N.T. The N.T. writers themselves speak of something short and simple to be believed, called sometimes "the faith" [*Eph. 4⁵⁻¹³*; cf. *Jude* ^{v. 3}], or "the Gospel" by S. Paul in 1 Corinthians 15¹⁻⁸, where in fact he gives a short creed, which may be like the "pattern of sound words" of 2 Timothy 1¹³, or "the words wherein thou wast instructed" of S. Luke [1⁴]. The early Christians believed in Christ, and a few facts about his life—their "pattern" was very like our Creed. There was of course no N.T. at the time its books were being written! Nor for long after. The early Church got on with some of the books only. We do not find the N.T. settled just as we have it till after the conversion of Constantine—after the age of the Martyrs [*in the Canon of S. Athanasius, 367: that of S. Cyril of Jerusalem, 340, still lacks the Apocalypse. All this point might be explained and expanded*].

So the Church Catechism never says, "You must believe the Bible," nor even "You must believe the New Testament"; but "Rehearse the Articles of thy Belief," that is the Apostles' Creed. Now the Creed is like an outline map of the N.T. It puts together the most important parts, and helps us not to lose our way—as many people have done.

BELIEF, FAITH, AND TRUST

I.—BELIEF

“ **I** BELIEVE,” with a *v*. Don’t confuse it with the noun “belief,” with an *f*. [*They do.*] In English we have a useful distinction between three different states of mind—belief, faith, and trust.

“ My belief is that the earth goes round the sun.” “ I believe that the stars are further off than the planets.” This means that I have no knowledge of my own ; but that I accept the statement because learned astronomers tell me it is a fact, although it *looks* as if the sun went round the earth, and people believed that it did until Galileo told them it didn’t. [1632.] They were very angry with him at first. The Inquisitors at Rome burnt his book, put him in prison, and made him recite the Seven Penitential Psalms once a week. They made him kneel down and say, “ With a sincere heart and unfeigned faith, I abjure, curse, and detest the said errors and heresies,” i.e. that the earth moves round the sun. There is a famous story, which, however, is not true, that when he got up from his knees, he whispered to a friend, “ But it *does* move all the same !” [*The story that he said, “ Eppur si muove,” is not true, but it is very famous and has become proverbial.*]

Most of our knowledge is really belief. The things we learn at school we don’t find out for ourselves, but we accept them because they are told us by people who do know.

II.—FAITH

The word “ Faith ” in English has a higher meaning. You could say “ I believe Harry has gone for a walk ” ; but you wouldn’t say “ My faith is that Harry has gone

for a walk." (There is unfortunately no verb to "faith"—you can't say "I faive": so you can't make any distinction in the verb, and have always to say "I believe.") Faith is stronger than belief: it isn't only in the mind but in the *heart* as well. In fact, you have belief with your head, but you have faith with your whole self. [*Westcott's definition*—"The Historic Faith," p. 7, is "*thought illuminated by emotion and concentrated by will.*"] Most people believe in God. Their belief is that there is a God. But I think you could only say of the people with real religious minds that they have *faith*.

So I should say that: *first*—we are brought up to believe in God (which is what our parents and godparents do for us); and then: *second*—if we stick to it, we come to have faith, a real living faith of our own. And I think the highest kind of faith is really what sight is to the body: it is soul-sight, the power by which we *see* spiritual things.

III.—TRUST

If you were an early Christian, speaking Greek, and reading the N.T. in its original language, which is . . . , you would find this all very confusing, because the Greek word [πίστις] means both belief and faith, and means also a third thing—Trust. [*In the Acts and the Epistles it often has another sense, which soon became technical*—"saving faith." *There is also a certain difference in "miracle-faith."* *But this would only lead to confusion.*] We sometimes use "faith" in this way: e.g. "I've great faith in Dr. Pillgiver," when we really mean, "I've great *trust* in Dr. Pillgiver." In the N.T. "faith" very often means that. Indeed one great distinction between the O.T. and the N.T. is that in the N.T. you have "faith in God," meaning "trust," while in the O.T. you have "the fear of God" [*Lightfoot, "Galatians," p. 151*]. That is one of the things Christ did: he changed the fear which is so common in so many parts of the O.T. into faith. [cf. *Gal. 3*²³, "*before faith came.*"] And it is the Spirit of Christ that has made our language richer than the old Greek in words which distinguish between different kinds of belief or acceptance, or confidence—especially *belief*, . . . *faith*, . . . *trust*; (and others like

credence, assent, conjecture, conviction, passive orthodoxy, saving faith, assurance, enlightenment, insight, vision) [*not to be taken down*]. The Psalms stand out in the O.T. as being so full of Trust, which is one reason why Christians have always loved them.

So when we read about faith in the N.T. it very often means a lovely trust in God—trust in a person whom we can love *and not fear*—trust in God and therefore in goodness, trust in the Spirit of God and therefore in truth, and in telling the truth, trust and complete confidence in the Son of God, who came into the world as the man Jesus Christ.

IV.—BELIEF MAKES CIVILISATION

Now this kind of belief is one of the chief things that have made us civilised. I don't mean only belief in Christ, which is the highest kind, but all belief or trust in people. Human progress is mostly due to trust in persons [i.e. *in human personality*]. You can see that for yourself at school ; for, as I said, our knowledge is mostly a collection of beliefs—we become educated by trust. For instance, a teacher says, " Henry VIII had six wives." The whole class believes him, and somebody asks, " Was it all together, or one after the other ? " Nobody in the class has ever seen that great man, or any of his unfortunate wives ; but they trust the teacher. But, dear me ! *he* hasn't seen Henry VIII either, or Katherine of Aragon, or any of them. He trusts the men who wrote the history books. But they hadn't seen Henry either ! They trusted other books. And so on, till you get back to the writings of people who *had* seen the bloated monarch, and even some who had the honour of being executed by him.

All education, and most civilisation and progress are like that. Men improve by trusting one another. That is why untruth does so much harm. It upsets the trust. Somebody once asked the philosopher Aristotle, " What does a man gain by telling falsehoods ? " And Aristotle answered, " Not being believed when he tells the truth." Those men who are most earnest and sincere in following truth, and who never try to " score " by making things out to be true when they aren't ; and especially those

men who suffer for the truth—like Galileo, or the martyrs, or do heroic things for the sake of truth, like Livingstone and other explorers and lots of other kinds of people—noble men like these win our trust. It is by the trust which mankind has put in its great leaders, and prophets, and teachers, that mankind has grown out of savagery into civilisation.

V.—AUTHORITY

So then you may say that belief means trusting in a person or thing. It means saying “Yes,” or “All right” to what we are told. In longer words, it is the acceptance of a statement on the testimony of another person. Generally it is on the testimony of a lot of persons ; and then we can speak of Authority. For instance, if I tell you that the moon is not made of green cheese, and that there is no such person (so far as we know) as the Man in the Moon, I tell this interesting fact on the authority of the Royal Astronomical Society—and other learned people. If I tell you that where you are sitting was once covered by huge glaciers of ice, or that men were living on the earth 200,000 years ago, and even for long before that, I am telling you on the authority of the geologists, and indeed of the whole scientific world.

Of course all authority is not equally good. Some people believe things on the authority of some small sect, or—what is still more strange—on the authority of some party in the Church. And authorities change : medical authority used to make people shut the windows of a sick room ; now it says that they must open them. So you mustn’t think that any authority is infallible (i.e. can’t make mistakes) : authority, if it is any good, goes on learning and improving, and getting nearer to the truth.

VI.—BELIEF IN THE CREED

When a child is taught to believe in the Creed, this doesn’t mean that he understands it, or knows much about it, or has much faith (in the real sense). It means that he accepts it on the authority of the Church, that he trusts the whole Christian world—or rather, the Christian world as a whole. This is quite a sensible thing to do.

Only, when anybody comes up to you and says, " You *must* believe this or that, or you can't be a good Christian"—be very careful. The world is full of people like that. Just say to them, " By the way, is it in the Creed?" If it isn't, it may be quite true and very important; but on the other hand it may not. It has not the same authority.

Sometimes such additions to the Creed, although crowds of people are keen on them, are quite wrong, and do an awful lot of harm. Sometimes they are quite true, and do a lot of good. You will have to find out. And if you always try to follow the truth, which means being honest and fair and sensible, you *will* find out. But if you aren't honest and fair you won't ever really find God, for God *is* truth.

So I think the Church is very wise to say to us when we are young: " Here is a short Creed for you to take on trust. If you accept it, you will have the belief of a Catholic Christian; for it is a creed of the whole Church, and it contains the most important truths about our religion."

BELIEF IN THE UNSEEN

We are going to recall much of the last lesson, in this difficult and important subject.

I.—THINGS WE CAN'T SEE

WHEN I say "I believe," I mean that I accept an idea which I have been told, or what I have read about, or thought about. Why do I use the word "believe"? Because I can't see that idea. Belief means to accept something which I can't see.

Some stupid people say, "Seeing is believing." They are wrong. A stupid man believes in what he sees—his wages, his pudding, his boots. But wise men believe in the things they can't see—and in the things they can't hear, or touch, or smell. A wise man's life is built up on a multitude of invisible things. On courage, for instance, and honour, and truth, and generosity. You can't see courage, or smell honour, or feel truth, or hear generosity. You have to believe in these things.

Joan of Arc was a French peasant girl. When she was quite small, she saw visions of saints who told her she was to save France from the awful state of misery it was in. When she was only sixteen she went out; and, although she was only a young uneducated girl, she got a little army together, and after many wonderful adventures she did save France when she was seventeen. She not only drove the English out (they had no business to be there), but her work made France a real united nation. It could not be called a nation before—only a collection of provinces often fighting against one another; but it has been a great nation ever since Joan lived and died. Can't you see her clattering through the narrow streets of Orleans that bright May morning [May 4, 1429]

her banner in her hand, and no weapons—to meet the retreating French and to turn them round, so that they charged back upon the English [*at the fort of St. Loup*] and won their first victory for a hundred years?

But Joan had never *seen* France. She had only believed in France. She lived in an out of the way village (south of Verdun) which was hardly in France at all. And when she went out to save France, she only saw parts of it. Nobody ever sees his country—only bits of it and a few of the people. The hero dies for his country—something that he has never really seen. Millions of brave men have fought for the British Empire, though most of them had never even crossed the sea before, and couldn't have shown you the British Empire on the map. They fought for the unseen.

II.—TRUSTING THE UNSEEN

All the important things are unseen—invisible. You can see a brave deed sometimes, but you can never see bravery. You can see a kind action, but you can't see kindness. You can't even see beauty, or hear it, or touch it; you can only see something that has beauty—you can see a beautiful flower, you can hear a beautiful tune, you can touch a beautiful statue. You can't even really, you know, see a man. You can see his face and his spectacles, his coat and his trousers; you can see his body. With X-rays you can see his bones. But you can't see *him*. For man is a spirit, just as God is a spirit.

So all our lives we are trusting in unseen—invisible things. They are the things that matter. And God himself is invisible, because God matters most of all; and is the maker of all things visible and invisible. S. Paul put all this in one great saying [2 Cor. 4¹⁸]: Everything that you can see, he said, passes away—is “temporal”: sooner or later it changes, and decays, and changes again. But the unseen things do not change or decay, or pass away; they belong to God, they are heavenly. So he said:—“We look not at the things which are seen, but at the things which are not seen: for the things which are seen are temporal; but the things which are not seen are eternal.”

III.—HOW PEOPLE BELIEVE

So then we are civilised by believing in the unseen things. And how do we believe? Last time we said that most of our knowledge comes from believing what people tell us. So let us put that down first:—

a. We believe in things because trustworthy people tell us. But the older we get the more we add other beliefs which come from our own reflections. So we will put down:—

b. We believe in unseen things because we see their *outward signs* in things that are visible. (These outward signs are the sacraments of the unseen; but perhaps you haven't ever come to that yet. So we won't explain.) For instance, a flower is a sacrament or outward sign of beauty; you can't see beauty, but you can see a beautiful flower, or garden, or house, or picture. So, you can't see God, but you can see godly things, and you can see saints who are godly persons—the outside of them, not the godliness—you can admire and appreciate them.

c. We believe in unseen things because we can see their *effects*. Even in the physical realm—the ordinary world—the most important things are invisible, like electricity. You can't see electricity; but [*T switches on the light*] you can see its effects.

And if you look at living creatures—men, animals, plants also—you can't help believing in that invisible thing, *life*, which is far, far more wonderful than electricity, and more wonderful than any miracle you can possibly imagine. God is life. He is the life of the body. He is also the life of the soul; and that spiritual life is the most wonderful of all, which is the reason why people don't understand it. [*Here we might sing "Immortal, invisible," E. H. 407.*]

You can't find God through the telescope. Nor through the microscope either. You can't find goodness through the telescope. Nor life through the telescope. Nor anything eternal. Not even electricity.

IV.—THE SIGHT OF THE SPIRIT

Last time we said that the difference between Belief and Faith was that belief is an affair of the mind, faith

of the . . . Yes, of the heart, as we say ; of the whole self. Faith is the eye of the soul [i.e. *of the spirit*] ; faith is our telescope for the unseen. It is to the soul what eye, and ears, and touch, and taste are to the body. Faith is not, as some people suppose, a weak form of knowledge : it is the most intense form of knowledge. The belief of Joan of Arc in France was more than belief. It was faith. Mere belief would not have made her great. It was faith—faith in her country, based on a great faith in God. And it burnt in her like a flame. Belief did not make S. Paul go through a long fury of persecution and die a martyr under Nero. It was faith—faith in Christ.

Belief is “rehearsed” by saying the Creed ; and some people think that if you say the Creed lots and lots of times, you will come to have faith : but you won’t. Belief grows into Faith when people try to be good, to seek truth, to love God, to worship and to serve. Faith is the crown on the head of belief [*a gesture here*].

V.—FOOTSTEPS

We said also last time that civilisation has grown by another kind of belief—by trust in great men. We believe in great men—though we have never seen them—we trust them, we follow them. Very few of us can invent anything : no one can invent more than a little bit—the rest has been invented by others. An aeroplane represents hundreds—thousands of inventions. We can’t invent much : we can only imitate ; our progress consists in walking in the footsteps of the great pioneers because we trust them. [*Nothing is trite to the young, so let us quote Longfellow.*]

“Lives of great men all remind us
We can make our lives sublime ;
And departing leave behind us
Footprints on the sands of time.”

Belief in the Creed means this also. It means belief in the greatest of all pioneers, in the greatest of all great men, Jesus Christ. It means trusting him, imitating him, following in his footsteps. And that way faith comes.

I BELIEVE IN

I.—BELIEF

YOU remember the three words—Belief, Faith . . . yes, Trust. I don't think a godparent could really promise that a child would grow up to have that splendid quality, Faith, or even to have Trust. The child might complain, "It wasn't fair to pledge me beforehand to something which I haven't got—at all events, which I haven't got at present." But the godparent would, I think, have a right to promise that a child should be taught to believe—that is to say—to accept, the Creed. We are brought up to accept lots of things—arithmetic, for instance, or history.

I think, when you say "I believe," that is what you mean. Not—"I understand all about it," but "I accept this as true, on the authority of the Church." And I think you ought to feel also, "I hope this belief will become truer and more intense, and that I shall be a man of *Faith*. I hope also that I shall not merely believe something about God, but that I shall put my whole *Trust* in him."

I don't think "I believe in" really means more than this, *in itself*. Though, of course, the more faith we have, the more it will mean to *us*. Sometimes people say that the word "in" makes it mean more—"I believe *IN* God." But I doubt if this is true. If you say to anyone, "Do you believe in fairies?" you mean, "Do you believe that there are such things as fairies? Do you believe in the existence of fairies?" You don't mean, "Do you put your trust in fairies?" or "Is your faith set on fairies?"

II.—DOUBT

So I think it is possible for a man to say the Creed, even though his faith may be very weak. There are many people who are like that. Some don't feel *sure* about the Creed. Others feel sure about most of it ; but have doubts about some part of it or other. This must always happen, because people never will all think alike. There is often much doubt mixed up with belief, and much belief mixed up with doubt. You remember Tennyson's lines :

" There is more faith in honest doubt,
Believe me, than in half the creeds."

He meant that some people have doubts, really because they care very much for religion, and try to think hard about it, while other people just rattle off the Creed without thinking about it at all.

So we must find room for the honest doubter, and not be impatient with him because he says, " I don't know about that." He may really care about it more than we do. But we have got a right to say to him, " If we are not impatient with you, you mustn't be impatient with us because we believe in the Creed. And you oughtn't to refuse to come to church with us just because the Creed is said. After all, it was there before *you*. And it is there to help you. And anyhow you can't expect the whole Church to alter something for *you*—and another bit for somebody else, and another for somebody else." Though we ought to admit that once the Creeds used not to be said in the services ; and that they are therefore not an essential part of them, but a later addition. [*Many of them have seen this difficulty already in their parents. Many will feel it for themselves in a year or two.*]

You can't really divide people into believers and unbelievers. Faith and doubt are often mixed up in one person. You remember what our Lord said to the father of the sick boy, when he cried, " If thou canst do anything, have compassion on us, and help us." [*Mk. 9²².*] Our Lord said, " If thou canst ! All things are possible to him that believeth." [*In R.V.*] And the dear old father burst into tears, and answered, " I do believe. Help thou mine unbelief !"

III.—DESCRIBING THE INVISIBLE

We have to believe in God because we can't see him. A beetle can't see *you*. If he thinks at all, he thinks you are part of the landscape. He probably thinks "What a horrid mountain! I shall have to walk round it." And *we* can't see the important things. You can see a football flying through the goal, but you can't see the *aim* of the man who made the shot. The aim was in his mind; and when you shout "Well shot!" you are really applauding something invisible.

A man can always say, "I don't believe in anything which is invisible." But he is silly to say it. Some people don't believe in honesty, and it certainly *is* invisible. We see the outward signs everywhere of a vast, invisible and intelligent Power; and so we believe in God.

We also see in the life of Jesus Christ a perfect revelation of the goodness and beauty of God. No nation had understood God's goodness before. So we believe in Christ.

Millions of people have believed this. They are called Christians; and all together they are called the Christian Church. They put this belief down in a few simple words, which we call the Creed. Simple as it is, it took a long time to make—six or seven hundred years—and was the result of much thinking and discussion. So that it ought to be very good. It *is* very good.

IV.—WORDS

Some people think that now that we know such a vast deal more about science and history, the Creed needs bringing up to date. But luckily it is short and simple, and it keeps to the plain teaching of the Gospels; and it has worn wonderfully well—like some beautiful old jewel. So I think it will last our time. Some day a word or two, here and there, may be improved. I don't know. Meanwhile people do bring it up to date whenever they explain it; and they *have* to, because the meaning of words changes as time goes on. For instance, I shall say to you that "Sitteth on the right hand of

God" doesn't mean that an angel got out a chair, and that Christ sat down on it, and has gone on sitting down on it ever since. "*Of course it doesn't!*" you say. And you are right. I don't suppose any thinking man ever exactly thought it did, or that S. Paul, when he used the words "sitteth on the right hand" [Col. 3¹] meant it *literally*. Some words are not meant to be taken literally. And all words are only a picture of the truth. They never can describe the truth exactly. As we said before, even the great word "Father," though it came as a new revelation of God, doesn't really describe God exactly, because God is much better, and kinder, and wiser than even the best of earthly fathers. [*With thoughtful boys and girls it is useful to get something like this Point into their minds, before it is rushed in. With younger classes it would be omitted.*]

V.—THE THREE PARTS

The Creed is in three parts. But it is all about one God. The first part tells us about God our Father, the Maker of everything. The second part . . . God revealed in Jesus Christ. The third . . . the Spirit of God working in the Church and in individual human beings. But remember there is only one God. People often talk as if there were three Gods, and almost any mistake is better than that.

We try to explain this in different words—*books* of words. We have one special word, the *Trinity*; but words will never quite explain it. If you want it put very simply, you can say "We believe in one God. This one God is shown or revealed to us in a man called Jesus Christ. Jesus is a manifestation of God. The Holy Spirit is also a manifestation of God." God is in fact manifested as the Creator or Father, as the Word or Son, and as the eternal Spirit. There is, of course, more to be said than that; but that is right as far as it goes. [*We shall come to this again.*] And you really can't understand much more, unless you study *Philosophy*, which is a difficult subject. People who don't know philosophy ought to shut up, and not try to argue about the Trinity. The important thing is the simple thing—There is one God, not three Gods.

THE PERSONALITY OF GOD

I.—IS GOD A PERSON?

WE now begin the articles of the Creed; and we begin in the deepest of deep waters with the great word "God." That is to say, we begin with the most difficult of all subjects, because it is the greatest of all subjects, the thought of God. As we get through the Creed, things become easier, and we get out of the deepest water. But the three letters of that short word God include all there is that is deepest and highest and broadest. And those three letters mean a Person. You are persons; and I am a person. But what sort of a person can God be? When you walk through a cloud of midges dancing in the sun, you hardly think of the midges as being individual beings at all; and they certainly aren't persons in anything like the sense that you are a person. Well, we are real persons; and we are much more like God in our natures than the midges are like us: but, compared with God, we aren't persons in anything like the sense that he is a person. In fact, it is not really quite accurate just to say that God is a person; what we really ought to say is that God *includes* Personality. He is more than a person. We are like God in our very small way—that is all. If I were to say to *John Smith* [*T names someone*]—"Stand up. Now everyone look at him. He is a person. Well, God is like that"—how very shy and awkward *John* would feel! He would think—"How absurd to say that God is like me! It makes me feel such a worm! Of course, God must be infinitely more of a person than I am."

Well, that's just it. Yet there are many people who say:—"Of course I believe in God: there must be a power, a spirit, everywhere, doing things. But I don't

believe it is a person—only just a power.” But think ! If John Smith is a real person, and God is not, then John Smith has something that God hasn’t got. And that something is just the important thing about John Smith—it is his personality, it is *being* John Smith. If he hadn’t any personality, he wouldn’t be John Smith ! He would just be a sort of a kind of a fog—a John-Smithy fog. But J. S. *is* a person : he may have his faults ! but at least he’s *that*. But if God is not a person, then J. S. has got something that God has not. How absurd ! Because then J. S. would be far greater than God. The creature—the created—would be greater than the Creator.

God, then, is more than a person. Orthodox theology says—not that God is merely a person, but that God includes personality in himself.

II.—PERSONALITY

Excuse me for dragging you into it, John ; but it helps us to understand. The Creator who had the wonderful thought of making a *person*—and millions of millions of them, for that matter—must at least be a Person himself. *Theos* is the Greek word for God : a man who believes in the real God is called a *theist* ; but a man who only believes that God is a kind of universal something—spirit without personality—is called a *pan-theist*.

You know how in fables all the animals talk together as if they were human beings. What fun it would be if they did ! For instance :—In the autumn an ant was drying all the wheat she had collected. A hungry dragon-fly asked her for food. “ Why didn’t you prepare your food in the summer ? ” she said. The dragon-fly answered, “ I hadn’t time : I was singing songs.” The ant laughed ; “ If you played in the summer, you must dance in the winter ! ” Horrid ant ! But people *are* like that sometimes.

Well, if animals talked in this interesting way they would be far more *persons* than they are—they would have more personality.

III.—A UNIVERSAL BELIEF

We think of a Person who is far, far above us. No words can express his greatness. We try to think of the

baffling wonder of the stars, in number as the sands on the seashore, and so distant that the light of many takes centuries to reach us. And is there a limit to space? And, if so, what is on the other side? And if there is no limit—our thoughts cannot conceive of that either! And then we remember that all this is only what God *makes*. It issues from him as writing comes from you—or as words. The stars are the words that God is talking. And he is the Person who speaks. He is the loveliness and holiness behind it all; he is the beauty of the sunset and the glory of the saint.

The universe makes us believe in God. It is all so marvellously planned, so carefully thought out. It could not have happened by chance. One day the Italian mathematician, Galiani [† 1787], was watching a man at Naples who betted that he would take a dice-box, with six dice, and throw it three times, and each time all the dice would be sixes. He threw once: six sixes. "That is possible," said Galiani. He threw the second time: six sixes again. "Umph!" thought Galiani, "that is *just* possible—once in a million." He threw a third time: six sixes again! "*Corpo di Bacco!*" shouted Galiani, "the dice are loaded!" Such things can't happen by chance. If boxes of alphabets were thrown on the floor, and you found them afterwards arranged to form a poem, you would know that it was not chance that had done it. Some one must have thought of it. And everywhere you find laws of nature which you can't alter—it is like trying to turn the handle of a door with someone on the other side holding it tight.

And our own minds make us believe. Our minds cannot have come by chance; the power that made them must be a mind too. Our conscience—our sense of right and wrong—must come from some eternal Right. Our religious feeling must be a response, a reply, to some eternal voice. We have an instinct about God.

All men everywhere have believed in God for deep reasons such as these. [*The "Universality of Cult": "No tribe or nation has yet been met with, destitute of belief in any higher beginnings . . . religion is a universal phenomenon of humanity."* Jevons, "*Introduction to the Study of Religion*," 7: "*Sometimes the ideas of divinity were of course vague and low; but always there has been*

religion, which is defined by Warde Fowler as 'the effective desire to be in right relation to the Power manifesting itself in the universe.'"] Even the savage tribes of Central Africa—modern investigators have discovered—believe in a great God who is mysteriously above all the idols they worship. Pantheistic religions, too, as in India, though they have been vague and weak about personality, have a belief in God; and Buddhists, who at first gave it up, have come back to it. [With the Jains it is, perhaps, rather their curious philosophy than their religion that is non-theistic.] Men's ideas and customs have been, and are, so amazingly different. They hardly agree about anything. Yet they have all agreed in this, though they express it in such different ways. It is in our very nature to look up to God.

The wiser men have believed most clearly and definitely in God. Philosophers have differed, and there have been some who refused to say "Yes" or "No," and preferred to go on thinking: that was especially the case in the 19th century, when people were rather dazzled by all the discoveries in physical science. But many even of these became less uncertain, or more positive, as they grew old [e.g. *J. S. Mill*]. And it is true that the greatest philosophers have reasoned their way to belief in God. Certainly the great poets, artists, and creators of all sorts have; and the great leaders. And, beyond all doubt, the *best* men, in all ages, have believed the most strongly in God as the supreme Person.

IV.—TRUST

When we were talking about the word "Belief," we said it might mean just (1) to accept anything, or (2) . . . Faith, or (3) . . . Trust. Yes! And I said I thought one's godparents had not the power to promise for us more than . . . Acceptance. But for many centuries the Creeds have been sung in church. When they are, I think "I believe" must mean more than acceptance. . . . Yes, it must mean—if we are saying it as part of our worship, "I trust in God." You can't trust in a Power, but you can trust in a Person.

This delightful feeling of trust is the first great step in religion. The reason why the Psalms are so popular is

because they are full of it. [*Here might be sung E.H. 93, "The God of Love," to its beautiful tune, or one of the other paraphrases of Ps. 23 (E.H. 490 or 491) or the Psalm itself.*] There is the idea in perfect words. Here is another verse [*Ps. 73²⁸*]: "It is good for me to hold me fast by God, and to put my trust in the Lord God." And, most beautifully, in Psalm 139⁸⁻¹¹. . . .

People sometimes say, "Why should I stand up in church and say I believe—or accept—all these difficult dogmas in the Creeds?" Well, I think the Creeds *are* said too much in the English Church; and I quite understand their feeling. The waters are very deep; and people do try and fathom them in different ways. But it would be easier for them if they said, "What people really do, or should do, is to stand and put their trust in God, about whom these things are said. And that is what I will do. I won't any longer put the stress on this or that article, but on the idea of trusting in God; and I won't bother so frightfully about the bits that puzzle me!" After all, it would be out of place to make a statement of our ideas, or a statement even of the Church's ideas, a part of our worship. In church the Creed is said as an act of trust. But here *we* are going to try to see what it means.

Still, all through our Lessons on the Creed, I want you to think of this—that religion means, first of all, just simply trusting in God.

THE TRINITY

With some classes, this might be made into two Lessons. With younger pupils, parts of it might be shortened or omitted.

I.—NOT TRITHEISM

YOU remember, two lessons back, we said that the most important thing to believe is that there is one God, *not* three Gods. To believe in three Gods is called after two Greek words—*tri*-(prefix), three, and *theos*, god—*tri-theism*. Almost any mistake is better than that. Yet it is very common. Indeed, most people do still talk as if the almighty Father were one god, and Jesus Christ His only Son were another god, and as if the Holy Ghost were a third. When people say that the Father was angry with the sin of the world, and that the Son died upon the cross in order to pacify (or placate) the Father, and that the Father was so satisfied with the blood of Christ that He agreed to let the world off—or rather only to let off a few who were to be saved—when people talk like that, and say that the Son made a bargain [“ transaction ” is the proper theological word] with the Father, to let off a few people, they are talking like tritheists. [See L. 58.] If there were two or three Gods, they might make arrangements like that. But God is one.

You will often find men who say that they believe in the teaching of Christ, but that they can't stand the teaching of the Church. And if you ask them why, you will generally find that they were brought up in some kind of tritheism, or they have heard sermons or read books full of tritheism ; and they think *that* is the teaching of the Church. It is not : it is a very bad heresy. But it is so common in popular ideas, and in hymn-books, and

in pictures, and stained glass, and in sermons, that we may almost say that popular Christianity is a form of tritheism, a worship of three gods.

Of course there is not a word about three gods in the Bible. But the great poet Milton has put many ideas into peoples' heads about tritheism, as well as about the devil, which they fancy they have got from the Bible. Tritheism is very much older than Milton: if you go to the National Gallery you can see a big picture representing an old man with a beard, the Father; he holds a crucifix, the Son; and over him is a dove, the Holy Ghost. [*There is one by Barnaba da Modena, another by Pesellino.*] Indeed, some old mediæval pictures represent the Holy Ghost as a man, too; and give you three men standing in a row to represent the Trinity! Milton did not profess to be an orthodox Christian, he was an Arian; and if you read *Paradise Lost* (which you don't), you will find, e.g. in Book III, a very fine description of the Father and the Son sitting on a throne together, and giving each other suggestions; and after a long discussion they agree to the plan that the Son should come into the world and be sacrificed. This is, of course, rank tritheism.

You must not misunderstand the two Creeds, because they are divided into three parts. They begin with the statement, "I believe in God" and "I believe in one God." And the Athanasian Creed or Canticle does guard against tritheism with tremendous care, but it is rather dry, and long, and difficult. Of course, the two Creeds don't mean to be tritheistic; but we can now see—now that we can look back over centuries of mistakes—that it might have been better if a few words had been put in to prevent this error arising. When the whole Church becomes one again, and it is possible to alter the creeds, perhaps something will be put in. In the Nicene Creed there is just one word—"I believe in *one* God"; but this is not enough: and in the Apostles' Creed there is nothing at all. Nor is there in the Summary in the Catechism, which says—"I learn to believe: First, in God the Father . . . Secondly, in God the Son . . . Thirdly, in God the Holy Ghost." The use of the word "God" each time does make that summary correct, because it shows that all the time it

is the one God that is meant ; but it does look like tritheism, and it has probably encouraged this very bad heresy. I hope a clause will be put in, when the Prayer Book is revised, to make this better.

II.—THERE CANNOT BE MORE THAN ONE GOD

Why is tritheism such a bad heresy ?

1. Because the whole message of the higher religions, Judaism, and Christianity, and of Islam (which borrows from them) is that there is one God. That was the great discovery of the Jewish prophets. The whole Bible, Old Testament and New Testament, is nothing without it. At every Jewish service, morning and evening they still repeat the text :—"Hear, O Israel, the Lord our God is one Lord" [*Dt.* 6⁴]. That is the *Creed* of the Jews. Our Lord repeated it. The watchword of the Muslims is similar : "There is no God but Allah, and Muhammad is his prophet." That is the Creed of Islam. If Christianity does not teach this, it is an inferior religion, a relapse into paganism, into the worship of more than one God, which is called polytheism, and is the religion of heathens.

2. It is quite impossible for people nowadays, if they know anything of science and philosophy, to believe in three Gods. To preach tritheism to properly educated people to-day is a perfectly hopeless task. And it is because there has been so much tritheism knocking about in the Church that so many clever people have been driven away. A clever boy was once asked, "How many Gods are there ?" He said, "One." "How do you know that ?" they said. He replied, "Because God must fill all heaven and earth, so there can only be room for one." He was quite right. Either there is a God, or there is not ; if there is, He must be everywhere and all in all.

3. So tritheism is really a denial of God. For if there are two Gods neither of them can be perfect. Their power must be divided ; unless one of them has *all* the power ; but then the other would not be God at all. Still more if there are three. And so you might go on.

4. The only religion that everyone can believe in must be a simple religion. The world can never be

united in one Church in any other way. To offer the world complicated dogmas and definitions is utterly hopeless. The world can never be saved and brought into one divine brotherhood, except by this grand simple belief in one God, and in the revelation of God's love and man's duty in Jesus Christ. That much everybody can understand and accept ; and the whole world can be converted to that. But the world will never be converted by complicated theologies, or by immoral doctrines about three separate Persons making arrangements together and atoning or reconciling God to man by a bargain made between the Father and the Son.

III.—THREE MANIFESTATIONS

So I don't mind much what mistakes you make, so long as you are quite clear that there is one God. That is why I gave you, two Lessons ago, the word "Manifestation." I wanted that word to soak in. If you say, "God is one *Mind*. The Father and the Son and the Holy Spirit are manifestations of that Mind," you will be very close to the truth—as close as you can get in the English language.

And because I want you to be quite clear, I am not going to try to put in more, because I should only confuse you—and you might become tritheists again ! To say, for instance, that there are three Persons in the Trinity is very confusing to us ; because "person" there has quite a different meaning from that of ordinary English ; and the proper Greek word, *ὑπόστασις*, has a different meaning again—in fact, it had two different meanings in the Church ! "Substance, nature, essence" is as near as we can get to the Greek—not "person" in our sense.

The followers of Christ came to believe in the Trinity, because they came to believe in the Son, and in the Spirit ; and they knew that these were personal, and that they knew them and loved them. But they knew also that they were not three separate persons, and that what the Father does he does through the Son and by the Spirit. Why is this ? Because the life of the One God is a rich and full life of fellowship. His personality is greater than ours [L. 36].

But I must stop ; I only want you to see how confusing it is to talk about these old philosophical terms. Because then you can see how easily unphilosophical people got muddled. And the result of the muddle is generally Tritheism.

I think S. Patrick was quite right. When he went to Tara to explain his religion to the heathen Irish chieftains, he remembered that they were wild Irishmen and not philosophers. He told them how he had been taken captive to Ireland, and now had come back again as a free man to preach to them. (I expect that he concealed the fact that he came from Britain !) And the Druid priests stood round the great chief and listened. And Patrick saw he was getting over their heads. So he stooped down and pulled up a shamrock. They all knew about shamrocks, though they didn't wear them in their button-holes then—in fact, they hadn't got any buttons. The shamrock or trefoil (*trifolium minus*) is a clover, and its leaves are composed of tiny leaflets. So S. Patrick held one up. "Here is one leaf, but it spreads out into three leaflets," he explained. "It is one leaf, though it has a threefold manifestation." He didn't show them three leaves—still less three shamrocks. No doubt Patrick had got his theology from S. Augustine, who was very sound against tritheism.

IV.—TWO PROCESSIONS

So was S. Thomas Aquinas, the great thinker of the Middle Ages. S. Thomas said, "There is one God : but there are two pro-cessions" ["*duæ processiones*"; *Summa* XIV], "one by way of the intellect, which is the procession of the Word ; the other by way of the will, which is the procession of Love," the Word being the Son, and Love being the Holy Spirit. So (1) the Creator of the World is manifested (though imperfectly) in Nature ; (2) He is also manifested in the Word (like His thought), whom we call God the Son ; (3) He is also manifested in Love (His will), whom we call the Holy Spirit [*L.* 48, *Pt.* 5].

The Son is the manifestation or the revealing of God in truth and wisdom ; the Spirit is the manifestation of God in the power of Love. But this manifestation

is not merely like a picture, it is *active* ; so S. Thomas calls it a " pro-cession "—a flowing out or spreading out. What happens in a P. in Church ? The ministers *go forth*. You can think of that quite easily if you think of the *rays*, or waves of light that proceed from the sun in the sky—a procession of sunshine. Once a cheese-paring committee built a hospital for the blind ; and they said : " Why go to the expense of *windows* ? " But the blind people all got ill. We can't live without the light waves. You know a plant cannot. Nothing can for long. These are the rays of the sun, and the sun is intensely hot. But from every very hot body there proceed *two* kinds of rays—light waves and heat waves ; and they are both necessary to life. We live on the two radiations from the intensely hot sun.

So you can think of God as being like the sun : the light waves are like the Christ, who shows or reveals God ; and is the light of God ; the heat waves are like the Spirit, who brings forth the power of God, and is the fire of God, the fire of Love. But if this puzzles you at all, stick to " Manifestation." That is very near, and prevents you being a tritheist. And if anyone says, " You are a heretic," you will be pretty safe in replying, " So are you ! "

THE FATHERHOOD OF GOD

I.—HEAVENLY

WE naturally think of God as a tremendous, awful power infinitely above us. And most people don't want to try and think what he is like. I expect that is quite right. Philosophers have to think about such things as the nature of God ; but most of us need only to accept him. We had to follow the philosophers a little way in our last Lessons, and just take a peep (from a great distance) at their high thinking. But you will be pleased to hear that we aren't going to do that any more. Ordinary men say, He must be eternal—without beginning (and, of course, without end either), above Time. He must be infinite, above Space, without any limits whatever. He must be almighty. He must be omniscient, knowing everything. He must be omnipresent, present everywhere. [*More of the Psalm quoted in Lesson 35—Ps. 139¹⁻¹⁵—might be read (by another voice) or sung here.*] He must be PERFECT.

Such is the great vague thought of the common man about God. During the French Revolution, André Saint-André, a Terrorist and an ex-priest [† 1813] said to a poor man, “ We will pull down all your church-steeple; and then you'll have nothing to remind you of God.” The peasant replied, “ But you can't pull down the stars.”

I think Jesus Christ liked the simple way peasants have—and most healthy men have—of thinking about God. He never troubled our brains with abstruse speculations and difficult thoughts about God. (The Greeks began that, and it nearly burst up the Church. But, of course, it was inevitable, and we must have a philosophy.) But he was very clear and definite about

the essential things, the things that matter most. So let us be like him, quite simple. If the whole Church will be like him, the whole world will join the Church. He taught that, *although* God is infinitely above us, and *because* he is perfect :

1. God is the Supreme person.
2. God is one.
3. God is a spirit.
4. God is our heavenly Father.
5. God is loving and good.

Let us consider No. 3 first ; since we took 1 and 2 in our last Lessons.

II.—GOD IS A SPIRIT

God is spirit or God is a spirit [*Jn. 4²⁴ marg.*]. Human words are clumsy, inadequate things. We haven't got a heavenly vocabulary, so we have to use words that were applied ages ago by rather primitive men. *Spiritus* in Latin originally only meant *breath*, and we use the word in all sorts of ways now—e.g. "spirits of wine." The Greek word *pneuma* we also use in odd ways, e.g. "pneumatic tyres" : it meant *wind*, and came from a Greek word meaning "to breathe."

So you can see primitive men trying to think of God, and saying, You can't see him, but you can *feel* him. He is like the wind, which is invisible, but is strong enough to blow down a house. And, they thought, this invisible wind is everywhere. It isn't : but the ether *is*. The ether is in all space, and the light that comes from a star is just tiny innumerable waves of the ether. And the ether is *in* everything too : in your bodies for instance. *Sound* is waves of air ; but *light* is waves of the ether. Since it has been discovered, we have a far better analogy (or resemblance) of God as universal spirit than our fathers ever dreamt of. And since scientific men now tell us that all matter (however solid) is really a form of electricity—everything you are made of, and everything you can see or touch—we can think of the ether as like God, on this side, and of electricity as like the hands of God, his power that is always creating and holding everything together.

But God is not merely spirit : he is the Spirit. He

is the Person who is spirit. You can think of that easily, because an angel, in a smaller way, is a person who is a spirit. The angels are not really people wearing armour or vestments, with wings which no airman would look at—and which would make it quite impossible to sit down. That is only in the stained-glass windows. But “Hush, little baby, don’t you cry, you’ll be an angel by and by,” rather confuses two kinds of spirits. An angel is a spirit. And when men die, they leave their bodies behind and become spirits too. And sometimes spirits can be seen and spoken to, because they have what S. Paul calls a spiritual body—a body much finer and lovelier than ours. The three apostles saw two such spirits at the Transfiguration: they were . . . ? Moses and Elias.

But then, of course, *you* are all spirits too! The intelligent part of you—your mind, your will, your *self*, is spirit. Your body is only a machine which your spirit uses. When you die, it is like throwing away an old suit of clothes—an old *vesture*. The world is like the vesture of God; and when the world dies—for it, too, will probably wear out and die millions of years hence—God will put aside that garment or vesture. “They shall perish, but thou shalt endure: they all shall wax old as doth a garment: and as a vesture shalt thou change them, and they shall be changed: but thou art the same, and thy years shall not fail” [*Ps. 102*²⁶. *These glorious words might also be sung, from verse 25*].

III.—THE ALL-FATHER

Jesus Christ showed men once for all that this tremendous, universal, immanent, transcendent Being [*Leave these epithets without explanation. Unexplained words have much value*] has a character so simple that a child can understand it. We have bodies, and sometimes our body covers up our spirit a good deal. God has no body such as we have. That is why to make pictures of God as an old man is such absurd idolatry. But he has a *character* such as we have. Jesus put what God really is in one word . . . ? Father. If you look at a dictionary [*concordance*] of the Bible, you will find that God is seldom called Father in the O.T. Even in the

Psalms, which are so full of love, this only occurs two or three times, and then vaguely [*Ps.* 68⁵, 103¹³, 89²⁶]. In the Prophets it occurs a little, it almost always means only the Father of the chosen people—not of the whole world, not the All-Father, not “Our Father.” They are getting towards the idea—not more. Then Jesus came and insisted on the Fatherhood of God; and he told his disciples to begin their prayers with “Our Father.” And the glorious word Father occurs about a couple of hundred times in the N.T.—almost on every page.

The Fatherhood of God is one of the great special characteristics of Christ’s religion. What is the other? The Brotherhood of . . . ?

Muhammad wrote many fine descriptions of the majesty of God. But he had no idea of God being our *relation*. God to Muslims is a transcendent king—which, indeed, he is—a despot, which he is not. “He is our Master, we are his slaves” is their cry. You may have noticed, when you have seen a camel, what a curious, complacent, knowing look the animal has, with his long, hanging lips, like a judge. Well, Muslims say there are ninety-nine names of God, and they repeat these ninety-nine names when they tell their beads. And the Arabs say—“We have ninety-nine names for God; but the camel—he knows the hundredth!” Well, *you* would find it difficult to think of five names for God without “Father” being one. But in all those carefully chosen ninety-nine names, which all Muslims repeat, the name “Father” does not occur at all.

Even Christians have had great difficulty in realising what God’s fatherhood means; and it is interesting to compare even the greatest writings of Christ’s disciples with the sayings of Christ himself. For instance, the author to the Epistle to the Hebrews (we don’t know who he was) writes very beautifully to console his audience for the persecutions they were suffering, and he says that this is really a chastening from God, and that God chastens us because he is our father [*Heb.* 12⁴⁻¹¹]. Of course, he says, all fathers flog their children, and therefore these sufferings show you that God is your real Father. And he quotes—whom? Christ? No, the Book of Proverbs [3¹¹]. If he had quoted Christ,

he would have found something about a son and a father—and it was a bad son, too—Who . . . ? Yes, in the parable of the Prodigal Son, the Father doesn't punish the son—he runs out, and falls on his neck and kisses him over and over again [*Lk.* 15²⁰, *R.V.*].—S. Luke alone thought it worth while preserving this parable—and then he gives him his best clothes, and has a feast, with music and dancing. Not much chastening there. Now *that* is the sort of father, Christ tells us God is—the nicest, kindest, loveliest father.

IV.—AND MOTHER

Perhaps we can understand that better if we think of God as if he were like a Mother as well as a Father. It is so important that we should understand God's tender love, because very few Christians do. If, for instance, you think somebody else is *beneath* you, you don't understand it! God will embrace him and feast him, and *you* will be like the nasty, jealous elder brother of the Prodigal Son! It is so important to understand the jolly doctrine of God's fatherhood. If you think of God as all that the nicest mother is, as well as all that the nicest father is, we shall understand a little better. And, of course, God is as much our mother as our father. Think of him as like our mother. All that the best father is, and also all that the best mother is, that God is to us.

Once in Scotland an eagle seized a little baby from its cradle, and carried it right up to the top of a dreadful precipice. The people came rushing together. A Highlander, who was used to the mountains, began to climb up from crag to crag, to try and rescue the baby. But he fell back and was hurt. Then a sailor tried, and crept up and up . . . But he had to come back. Suddenly a woman rushed up to the rocks: she swung herself up from one ledge to another, and climbed up and up. Could she get higher? Everyone's heart was in his mouth. She did! She reached the baby, and the eagle flew away. And now—but so carefully!—she let herself down the dizzy height, step by step, till she brought him to the ground safely. She was . . . his mother.

GOD IS QUITE GOOD

I.—THE FIVE POINTS OF CHRIST

WE have been saying that the infinite, universal transcendent Spirit, whom we call by a name of three letters, GOD, and whom we cannot imagine as he really is, any more perhaps than the midge in a sunbeam can imagine the musician who is playing the organ—we said that this eternal God was revealed by Jesus Christ in quite a clear, simple, and intelligible way. Five points are easy to remember: so we give five. Can you remember? . . .

1. God is the Supreme person.
2. God is one.
3. God is a spirit.
4. God is our Father.

And there was a fifth, which we will think about now to-day: God is perfectly good; he is loving and beautiful and true. We can put this for simplicity into three short words that are the centre of the Christian religion.

5. God is love.

In other words:—God includes personality in himself; there is only one God; he is spirit; he is the All-Father; he is love or charity.

II.—GOD DOES NOT BRING DISEASE

You may think, "Well, this fifth thing about God, that he is loving and good doesn't need a whole Lesson. Everybody knows it."

But that isn't a bit true. When Christ taught that God is love, he was teaching a most difficult thing. Very few persons took it in. Very few Christians have really dared to believe it. They constantly—even still to-day, when the idea *is* getting about more—they constantly still think of God as behaving more like a devil than like God.

Let me give you an example of this.

Disease. Christ taught quite clearly that disease and pain are not the will of God; and he spent his life healing people and making them well. But people have still gone on thinking that disease is God's will. Often you see the inscription, "Thy will be done," on the grave of a little child. But God's will is that every little child shall be healthy and strong. If men were not unjust and foolish, every child would have a good home and a healthy life. So long as some people live in crowded, dirty houses, while other weaken themselves by luxury and vice, there will be early death. It is not God's will. If we all behaved like Christians, early death would disappear.

There is a prayer which begins :—" O Almighty God, who in thy wrath didst send a plague upon thine own people in the wilderness, for their obstinate rebellion against Moses and Aaron : and also in the time of King David, didst slay with the plague of Pestilence three score and ten thousand, and yet remembering thy mercy didst save the rest." [*It is still in the B.C.P., but no one uses it now.*] People used all to think like that, not very long ago. Think of it. God is angry—he is in a rage—because David has taken a census of the people (as civilised people do now every ten years). So he kills 70,000 innocent people, and then changes his mind. That was their idea of God.

The jolly, healthy feeling in our body comes from God. Illness comes from the devil. When the doctors and sanitary reformers stop disease, God is on their side !

III.—GOD IS NOT A BRUTAL TYRANT

But, how *could* people think of our dear loving Father as sending plagues in his wrath ? It is quite simple.

They didn't really believe that he *is* our loving Father. And even sixteen centuries after Christ they still didn't understand, and they printed a prayer like that, with the authority of Parliament, Church, and nation ! [We must realize that plagues are the result of insanitary living, chiefly of dirtiness. They are due to disregard of the laws (as we call them) of Nature, and are not inflictions of an arbitrary God. Wars, in the the same way, men bring about by their own wickedness and folly. See L. 17-18, *where an attempt is made to discuss catastrophes in general.*]

Why couldn't they understand that God is not cruel ? Because they were cruel themselves. And when they quoted Christ about God being our loving Father, all the time they were thinking of God as like themselves—cruel, unjust, passionate. [Men were still unspeakably cruel ; and this blinded them to the teaching of Christ, e.g. about the Tower of Siloam (*Lk.* 13⁴) ; but they were also dazzled by the light of the English Bible, and had not come to realize the progressive character of revelation.]

I sometimes wish that we never used the word " King " in speaking of God. But I suppose now that we have a better idea of kingship, it doesn't matter. In old times it did. A king meant a cruel despot, a selfish, worthless Sultan—like an Emperor of Delhi, sitting on his peacock throne, all blazing with jewels, and condemning a poor wretch to death, while he watched out of one eye the last one being executed, and with the other the poor trembling beggars who were waiting their turn for judgment. " Trembling before the judgment seat "—the men of old time knew what that meant ! And they thought of God, wrathful, arbitrary, death-dealing, and always changing his moods—sometimes weakly indulgent, sometimes wildly cruel.

They thought of him as a despotic monarch. Think of Alexander the Great, so famous a king, so much admired ! Seventeen cities were named after him (some still are, as Alexandria and Candahar), and how many men have been called by his name ! For 500 years the men of the Greek and Roman world shaved clean, so as to look like him : he set that fashion (it was one of the few good things he did !) and the fashion lasted for

five centuries. The beau-ideal of a king ! Yet he was a ruthless, treacherous, lustful, drunken monster. He destroyed whole cities, like Thebes, where he sold 30,000 people into slavery ; he treacherously killed his own faithful friends, like Parmenio. Once a friend of his, called Hephæstion, was ill : his physician put him on a strict diet ; but Hephæstion was hungry, and one day, when the physician had gone to the theatre, he ate a roasted fowl and drank a flagon of iced wine. That killed him. Alexander, to show his grief for Hephæstion, had the unhappy physician crucified, and ordered that all the grown-up people of certain villages (which he had just taken) should be massacred, as a sacrifice to the spirit of Hephæstion. And no king has been more admired than Alexander *the Great* !

IV.—GOD DOES NOT BURN PEOPLE

When people thought of God as a tyrant, a Sultan, it seemed quite natural that he should be horribly cruel to men. Here is a sentence about what a Muslim thinks : “ An arbitrary master is his Judge, who may untold ages ago have predestinated him to Hell—his sins crowd upon his mind in the awful moment of death—the flames of the Abyss seem already raging for their prey, and he has no refuge, no hope.” (Tisdall, *The Religion of the Crescent*, 94.)

Horrible ! you say. Think of the ghastly pain of burning : imagine even your little finger being held by someone in the fire. Imagine your whole body—you can't ! But try and imagine that you have died, and that God says : “ I arranged this long ago. You committed one sin that was not properly absolved.” “ Only one ? ” you say. “ That is quite enough ! To hell with you ! ” Imagine yourself being led away : the torture of the first hour : of the first day : a year : a century : a million years of ghastly horror : and it still goes on, and will never, never stop.

A nightmare ! But people believed it. I fancy they never really thought it could happen to *them*. Only to other people, especially the people they disliked !

And have Muslims believed this ? Yes, dear children of God ; and Christians too by the million. Here is

one example—words written by a great and famous leader, S. Ignatius Loyola: “Consider the anger of God avenging this first sin [of Adam] on all the descendants of the first sinner: pestilence, war, famine, desolation of the earth . . . so many souls cast into hell. What consequences, and what chastisements for one single sin!” “There is perhaps in the depths of hell a soul that God has eternally condemned for such or such a mortal sin committed one single time.” [*The Spiritual Exercises*, qu. by Fr. Tyrrell.]

“Ask yourself,” Ignatius says, “what this God is who punishes a single mortal sin in this manner.” Well, I *will* ask myself, and the answer is—He is a devil. He is not God at all. And, thanks be to God, he does not exist!

God is love. Think of the kindest mother, think of the tenderest father, think of the gentlest sister, think of your jolliest friend. They are hardly love at all, compared with the unspeakable love of God.

Yet people used to be brought up to think of God in that devilish way—worse than Alexander the Great, because I think Alexander would have relented after his enemies had been in hell a few years! Yes, as a great, horrible, merciless, implacable devil.

V.—GOD DOES NOT DISLIKE US

The famous journalist, W. T. Stead, had, like most people, been brought up with the idea of God always angry, always displeased, always punishing. One day something happened: he was sitting in a summer-house, and suddenly the thought came into his head—“God is not angry with me! Of course he isn’t!” He was a different man ever after.

Of course God is not angry with you! He is not even always finding fault, and displeased with you. He *loves* you—far more than your mother—he sees the best in you. He believes in you—even if you don’t believe in him! He is out to help you.

VI.—GOD IS LOVE

Men think of God as cruel because *they* are cruel. And it makes them more cruel to think of God as cruel.

So the idea has gone round and round [*Gesture*]. And it makes them unjust to think of God as unjust. But we believe in Christ, and we know that God is love.

Therefore: 1. We pray to him because it's the greatest thing in the world to talk to the good Father.

"Speak to him, then, for he hears, and spirit with spirit can meet. Closer is he than breathing and nearer than hands and feet."

2. We trust in him, because we know he will do the best for us.

3. We try to be kind to all men and women and children (and to animals, also) because God is kind to all. The health in our bodies, the joy in our hearts is God's will working in us; and because he is our good Father, we try to treat all men as our good brothers.

ALMIGHTY

I.—CAN GOD DO ANYTHING ?

WE generally go wrong about this word, because we think that "Almighty" must mean "able to do anything." "God can do anything he likes," we say. Then we see some poor creature dreadfully ill and miserable, and we say, "If God can do anything, why doesn't he make this poor creature well again?" Or someone we love very much dies. And we say it again. Or there is a horrible war; and men kill and hate one another—just the opposite of what Christ told us to do; and frightful misery comes; and we know that war is foolish and mad. Then we say, "God can do anything. Why does not he stop it?"

We did discuss this when we were talking about the Problem of . . . Evil [L. 16]. Do you remember? I said that the answer to the question, "Why does God allow us to do such horrible things?" is—"Because he cannot" . . . does anyone remember? . . . "he cannot *help* it." So, anyhow, *we* have not said that God can do anything.

After all, when you come to think of it, it is not much of a compliment to anyone to say they can do anything. It is hardly flattering to say "That man is capable of anything" [*capable de tout*]. "There's nothing that boy won't do." "That burglar would do anything." There is a good meaning, but there is also a wrong meaning to the idea of being able to do anything.

II.—LIMITATIONS

Just remember the word "omnipotent," with its noun "omnipotence." It is the Latin form of "almighty," and is used in the Latin Creeds.

Now there are three well-known limits—or Limitations, as they are called—to almightiness or omnipotence. Three kinds of things that God himself could never do. I wonder if anyone has guessed one of these? . . . You all know . . . We can all do . . . wrong. But God can never do . . .

(a) So put that down first. [*To an older class*: Would you like to have the proper word that philosophers use for this? “The Ethical Limitation.”] God can never do wrong.

(b) There is a second Limitation [“The Logical L.”]. God cannot make—[*actualize*] a contradiction. God cannot make 2 and 2 make 5. (Some of *you* do sometimes!) He cannot make two hills without a valley between. He cannot make triangles whose angles are not together equal to two right angles.

(c) The third Limitation [“The Temporal,” i.e. *Physical L.*] is not so easy to understand. So I won’t worry you with arguing about it; but I will just give you this—God works by *law*—just as the British [*or American*] Government works by law [i.e. *the temporal order is fixed: events do not happen arbitrarily, but in accordance with law. But these terms will only confuse them*]. Let us take this idea of law as our next Point.

III.—LAW

Once I was in a railway station, and suddenly a crowd of wild and dirty children dashed past the ticket-collector. Three little girls were knocked over and began to howl. Two small boys started fighting. Another boy bagged a bunch of flowers from a girl, and *she* began to cry. Some others were just beginning to play cricket on the platform when the train dashed in, and nearly killed two infants who were sitting crying on the edge of the platform. Then there was another wild rush. The big boys shoved into a first-class carriage, to the fury of an old gentleman who was asleep there. The others tried to get into carriages fifty at a time. “This is a fine pandemonium,” I thought. “What is the cause?” Then I saw a poor little waif of a parson with a long black coat, and large spectacles, and his hat pushed back on

to one ear, running backwards and forwards, almost in tears, feebly waving his hands.

That was the reason ! The ruler of that party had no authority. He was a weak little man, poor thing ! He could not keep order. *There was no law.*

There you have it. A strong man works by law. A strong government works by law. A weak king might say, "Dear me, what shall the Government do to-day ? Shall we have an investiture, or a cabinet meeting, or shall we shut up shop and go out for a lark ? " A strong king would arrange it all long before, and would stick to it. His laws would be like the laws of the Medes and Persians which altered not.

God is stronger than the strongest man, and he works by law. He does not say in the morning, "Dear me, I wonder if the sun had better rise to-day, or whether I hadn't better turn on the moon instead." The sun *does* rise. Yes, that undecided god would be a comic god, like a king in a pantomime. He would not be God at all, but the very opposite.

The sun *does* rise. And it's a jolly good thing for us that it does ! It is never a fraction of a second late. We explain that by saying that it works by law. Everything in Nature works by law : that is to say, we find on investigation that everything has a cause, and that all the causes fit in together like an infinite clockwork. The ancients didn't know that. They thought their gods were always larking about, and drinking nectar, and having a good time.

We have discovered that God works by law. This shows, not that he is weak, but that he is enormously . . . strong. He *is* law, among other things. "Order is heaven's first law" (*Pope*). But because his nature is law, he cannot contradict his own nature. He cannot be lawless. He *cannot*—there is the 3rd Limitation [The Physical or Temporal L.]. Just because he is all-powerful, he works by law ; and just because he works by law, he cannot break his own law.

IV.—NOT MAGIC.

People are always thinking of the Almighty as if he were a sort of divine conjurer. A conjurer puts down

a blue silk handkerchief, rolls up his sleeves, takes the shiny hat of the smart gentleman in the front row, and lo ! a white rabbit tumbles out ! “ No deception, ladies and gentlemen ! ” But of course there is deception. It is a trick. It is not almighty law.

God does not do conjuring tricks. He is too great. His work is all in order. His laws *have* to happen. If Harriet *will* play with the matches, and sets fire to her dress, off she goes and is burnt to a cinder. If Johnny Head-in-air were to walk off this roof [T. *points*], he would tumble down and break his neck. God would not suspend the law of gravitation for Johnny. He would if he could—because he is very kind, he is Love ; but he *can't*. And he can't, because the law of gravitation is part of him.

It would be awful if he could, and did. Because, if he stopped the law of gravitation, to save some one who had just walked over a precipice—if he stopped it, What . . . ? The whole universe (including *you*) would smash up, and dissolve. There would be no sun to-morrow morning ! There wouldn't be a to-morrow morning at all. Only a ghastly chaos.

When we were talking about the Problem of Evil, we said that God had given man a certain amount of free-will ; and that so God has limited his power in that way too. [*For some classes this might be explained over again as another lesson, 40a.*]

V.—ALL-RULING

Here it is all in one sentence : “ Omnipotence means—THE POWER OF DOING ALL THINGS THAT ARE POSSIBLE.” [*Aquinas. If they know Latin—“ Potestas faciendi omnia possibilia.”*]

“ Omnipotens ” is the word in the Latin Creeds, “ all-powerful.” But Greek is a more exact language ; and the original word for Almighty, in the original Greek Creeds is not “ all-powerful ” [*παντοδύναμος*], but *Pankrator* [*or παντοκράτωρ*] which literally means “ all-ruling.” [*The Latin word has both meanings.*] REMEMBER THAT. “ Almighty ” does not mean “ able to do any conceivable or inconceivable thing.” It is a translation into English of *Pankrator*. It means “ all-

ruling." God rules over all. What does it mean . . . ?
Yes ; and don't you forget it !

Omnipotence, then, means the power of doing all things that are . . . possible. It also can have the meaning of " all-ruling," and this is the meaning of the original Greek word for " almighty " in the Creed.
" I believe in God the Father all-ruling."

REVISION ON "GOD THE FATHER ALMIGHTY"

We are now in the most difficult part of our Lessons ; and the Teacher must notice his flock carefully to see how much they can understand. Especially will this be the case in the Christology of the Lessons soon to follow. We have to think of how much will be taken in,—and remembered. Nothing else matters : a dry, correct theological disquisition—assuming that dry disquisitions are generally correct, which they seldom are !—will be perfectly useless, because the young people will not listen to it. Indeed, it will be worse than useless, because it will create habits of distaste and inattention.

When we try to simplify (as we must for younger children) we often exaggerate. The one thing, for instance, we suppose, is to be " sound " on the Divinity of Christ ; and we teach Monophysitism or some other form of Docetism, or we fall into Arianism. We must at all costs avoid the error of the Unitarians, we are told ; and we forthwith teach rank Tritheism. But Docetism is just as much a heresy as Sabellianism ; and Tritheism is a more serious, as well as a more common, heresy than Unitarianism. The young will not know this ; but what they will feel is that the Teacher is explaining something that is unreal and unintelligible ; and the older they are, the more their minds will refuse to follow him in such intricacies and mutual contradictions as are involved in much popular theology. How many in the past, as they grew up, came to the conclusion that they could not be Christians !

The remedy is an easy one : to go back to the New Testament, and especially to the Gospels, and to teach first what the disciples learnt first, that the one God has been revealed as our Father by a real perfect man, Jesus Christ. Theology is the thinking which follows on this. The

Church gradually put away the exaggerations on either side, and agreed in the belief both in the real humanity and the real divinity of Jesus Christ. Our simple class-theology will also be a thinking, which follows, one Lesson after another, after we have grasped the unity of God and the reality of Jesus. Young children will not be able to understand much more than this, the first simple statement ; nor is there any danger from this simplicity, since it is true. Thinking, school-trained boys and girls will, the writer hopes, be able to follow all the Lessons.

For the intermediate classes, the lower forms at a secondary school, the upper standards at a primary school, or the younger element in the greater catechism, some of the Points may have to be reduced. But the writer would rather suggest that the Lessons be cut in half, and each half treated as a separate Lesson, and beaten rather thin, by recapitulation, further explanation and fuller illustration. If the Teacher's own mind is clear, this should not be difficult—if he knows what the word " God " suggests to his mind, and what " Man " suggests ; if he has a clear notion of Personality, and if the ideas of Divinity and Humanity have some precision in his thought. He should not attempt to explain anything that appears confused to his own mind, nor to assert anything of which he is not entirely convinced. Silence is far better. He will naturally pray with special earnestness before teaching these great matters ; and he will be able to improve on the Lessons here given.

It may be well for the Teacher to make a Revision now after every three or four Lessons ; but such Revisions had better be more than a recapitulation of former titles, and might, perhaps, take the subject revised in a different order. We shall ourselves, as we get on with the Creed, give two or three Lessons which go back again to the Fundamentals. Meanwhile, here is a suggestion for a Revision on the words " God the Father Almighty," with a little new matter to freshen and enforce the argument.

I.—ALMIGHTY GOD

THE Creed puts the Fatherhood of God before Creation. We shan't begin to think of Creation till next time. " The Father " is put first, because this is the special revelation of Christianity. At first we

simply think of the wonder of the infinite Being above us [L. 36]. We look up, and about us, and everywhere we see order. God works by law because he is so strong. That is what "Almighty" means: not doing anything he might fancy if he were like you or me, but doing everything that is lawful and right. The word "almighty" really means all-ruling [L. 40]. God can do everything that is possible.

II.—GOD THE SUPREME PERSON

Our Lord did not try to explain the wonder and mystery of God, or to philosophise about him. If he had, we should only have misunderstood. We can't help trying to think, but our thoughts are very imperfect. Fortunately, the Jews had already a tremendous conviction that God is a person and that there is one God, and no other God but God. So our Lord was able to take that for granted, and to build upon it. Of course, God had prepared the Jews for this very purpose, to stand up to the world, and proclaim that there is one God. That is why the history of the Jews, much of which is in the O.T. (but not all), is so important for us [L. 37]. God is the Supreme person—more than a person: or, more accurately, God includes personality.

III.—GOD A SPIRIT

Many Jews, however, thought of God too much as like a man. The ancients could not get the idea of his having personality, like ourselves, without thinking of him as a man like ourselves, a glorified man walking about, and visiting certain places, like Jerusalem. People even to-day are still apt to think of God as like a king with a crown and a big beard. Our Lord corrected this by reminding people that God is a Spirit. We are all spirits (clothed in bodies); but he is the infinite Spirit [L. 38].

IV.—ONE GOD

We have to come back to this because it is so important, and there can be no right Christianity without it. Many Christians think that the doctrine of the Trinity means that there are three Gods. This very bad

heresy is called Tritheism. There is one only, God. To say that there are three Persons is correct, but very confusing ; because the word " person " is then used in a " technical " sense, with quite a different meaning. An example of a word being used in a technical sense is the " goose " of a tailor. There is only one mind in God, not three minds ; but there are three manifestations of God. The Son or Word of God and the Holy Spirit proceed from the Father : that is, they may be spoken of as like radiations, like the heat-rays and light-rays which proceed from the sun in the sky [L. 37].

V.—THE FATHERHOOD OF GOD

When Christ said that God is (1) the personal Creator, and is (2) One God, he was saying what every Jew believed. When he said (3) that God is a Spirit he taught what many did not understand. When he said (4) that God is our Heavenly Father, he was teaching something so wonderful and lovely that even now people don't grasp it. We can understand it best by thinking of God as our Mother as well as our Father in heaven. He is entirely kind and tender and careful about each one of us, like the very nicest father and the very nicest mother we can imagine [L. 38].

VI.—GOD IS LOVE

But an even more tremendous thing about God that Christ taught us is (5) that he is Love. This includes all the rest. People are still always thinking of God as like an oriental king or sultan, as angry, and unjust, and cruel. They could not conceive of a good king : they treated men like Alexander the Great, or the more brutal of the Roman emperors, as if they were gods ; and they thought of God as if he were a Roman Emperor. God does not smite people with disease, or torture them, in this world or the next. He loves us all, and does what is best for us ; and he helps us to make the world happier and better, and asks us to help him. He is our dear Father. He is Love. And when you love anyone, that is a breath of God in you [L. 39].

“MAKER,” I.—CREATION

I.—DESIGN

A CARPENTER sees a very well made table. He says, “Somebody must have made this table.” Suppose you say, “O, I think some bits of wood tumbled together, and they happened to be the right shape; and then they happened to fit themselves in; and so the table got made by accident.” The carpenter, if he is a bluff, outspoken man, will then say, “Rot! I know about tables!”

Then you show him another table. This one has all been made by machinery. Suppose you say to him, “My dear Mr. Spokeshave, this one is a machine-made table. I suppose you won’t tell me this one was made by somebody. It was made by a machine.” The carpenter will probably give you a double answer. He will say:—(a) “If you had ever seen a furniture factory you would know that there are hundreds of somebodies working there; that they work under foremen; and that the foremen work under a manager.” So there is even less chance about the machine-made table: many persons have co-operated together in a carefully planned system.

Besides, he would say:—(b) “Who made the machinery?”

Well, that is an illustration of the way people have argued about the creation of the world. Our great-grandfathers thought the world was made, somewhere in the spring of 4004 B.C., like a table, and that the Creator took a working-day week over the job. That sounds rather too simple now, doesn’t it? It is; and the date is millions of years wrong. But the main idea

is all right. Just as there is *design* in a table, so there is design in the world.

Our great-grandfathers used always to quote a writer named Paley, who put this argument very cleverly—it is called the *Argument from Design*. He said: If you picked up a watch from the seashore, you would say “Someone has made this. Just look at it!” [*T. takes out his watch.*] He was all right as far as he went; but what he forgot is that a watch is a carefully finished article, while the world has the look of being unfinished. The world is infinitely more wonderful than a watch. Infinitely more wonderful! But it has the look of being imperfect.

II.—SPECIAL CREATION

Well, our grandfathers then began to find out something about how the world was made. They discovered that the world was for a long time vapour, and then rock and mist and boiling water; and then, after a long, long time, only fishy kinds of animals, and so on through millions of years. Two great men, Darwin and Alfred Russel Wallace, found out something of the way all this had happened [*natural selection*]. People generally call it Evolution or Development. That is to say, Creation went on developing, like a bud into a flower, getting gradually better and better. It was a process. When you take strawberries and make them into jam, that is a process! But if you were to take a thousand strawberries, like a conjurer, and they suddenly *were* jam, that would be—well, the term for that is *Special Creation*.

Now we said last time that men were always falling into the idea that God is an almighty conjurer; and that this idea is quite wrong, because God works by law and order. So, then, when Darwin and the other great scientists, began to find out something of the process by which things were made, many good people were shocked. They had got the conjurer idea into their heads. They had always believed in Special Creation. But they were wrong. The world is made by a process: it is not like the hand-made table (except in its beauty); it is rather more like the machine-made table. The process—evolution, development—whatever you call it, is the machinery: and this machinery is always going on.

When your mother last had a baby, she was part of the machinery : she was helping God to create ; she was, under God, the creator of a baby.

Now, our grandfathers had the idea that they were bound to believe in Special Creation—that God made the Universe suddenly in a week—because they thought this was the Christian idea. They were wrong.

III.—THE POEM IN GENESIS

They thought they had to believe it because it was in the first chapter of Genesis. When people talk like that I go nearly mad ! Because it is so *stupid* not to understand what poetry is. A poem is not a scientific treatise. It is something much greater. It is a song about the eternal goodness and beauty. When Shakespeare wrote Hamlet, he didn't care whether Hamlet was a prince of Denmark or not, or whether he had really been engaged to a girl called Ophelia. As a matter of fact, he made him like an Englishman. What he was after was the eternal, invisible thing about Hamlet—his character. And the play is the finest study of character in the world. It is enormously *true*. When Wordsworth wrote his perfect little poems about Lucy :—

“ She dwelt among the untrodden ways,
Beside the springs of Dove,
A Maid whom there were none to praise,
And very few to love.

She lived unknown, and few could know
When Lucy ceased to be ;
But she is in her grave, and, oh,
The difference to me ! ”

When you read that, you don't say, “ I must go and make inquiries at this river Dove, and find out if there was a girl there called Lucy ; and if it was really true that there was no single person in the place to praise her ; and if a man named Wordsworth ever really came along and loved her.” You wouldn't say that, would you ? O, say you wouldn't ! Because, if you would, you would be an ASS !

Well, you do know what poetry is, don't you ? The first chapter of Genesis, down to 2³, is a complete poem—

one of the finest in the world. It is a real poem, with a refrain (or sort of chorus) at the end of each verse. It was a song once. Then, from 2³ onwards, quite a different author comes in, who writes in quite a different style, and in prose. [*This might be read afterwards in extracts, as a Lesson, almost chanted, and then the style of reading changed for a verse or two after 2³.*]

IV.—THE POINT OF THE POEM

The noble old poet, who wrote that song, very likely thought that the world *was* made in an ordinary working week. But what he wanted to explain—the eternal inspired idea he was singing about—was something else. The other people in that part of the world, of the same [*Semitic*] race as the Jews, thought that the world had been conjured into existence by various gods—most of them not very nice gods. This poet lived when the Jews were in captivity in Babylon (6th century B.C.) : he saw all these nasty gods being worshipped around him. He wanted to keep the Jews from that ; and he made this poem to show two things and to draw one practical conclusion. The practical conclusion was that everybody ought to rest once a week, and that we ought not to make other people work for us on “ Sunday.” The three things he wanted to show are the three most important things in the universe : (a) That the world is made by one eternal God. (b) That this one true God is good. (c) That man is *like* God, “ in his own image ” ; so that goodness—not wickedness, and cruelty, and greed—joins us to God. Dear, noble old prophet ! If he saw the world from his heaven in the days of our grandfathers, how surprised he must have been at men’s stupidity ! Not seeing a poem is like not seeing a joke. If you can’t, you *can’t*, and you are all wrong !

V.—WHO MADE THE MISTAKE

The Special Creation idea has been exploded by natural science—fired all to bits. God is not a conjurer, you can be sure of that. But the interesting thing about it all is that the greatest of the old Fathers of the Church didn’t believe in it either. S. Augustine, for instance,

rejected it 1500 years ago : he was practically an evolutionist, and had got hold of the scientific idea so far as one could in those days ; and the great philosopher S. Thomas Aquinas was still carrying on the idea 700 years ago—he was not so clear, but he did see that creation was still going on. It was not till the 16th century—the time, say, of Queen Elizabeth—that the doctrine of Special Creation was really fixed upon the Church [*mainly by the “last of the Schoolmen,” Suarez, †1617. See J. Y. Simpson, “Spiritual Interpretation of Nature,” p. 284.*]. Catholics and Protestants alike adopted it ; and this was made worse by the superstitious way in which great Protestants, like Calvin, took the whole of the Old Testament as if it was a scientific treatise written by God. *They* couldn’t understand poetry ! They nibbled and burrowed in the words of the Bible, like mice among old biscuits ; and they knew about as much about Creation as the mice do about biscuit factories.

God made the world, but not as a carpenter makes a table. More in the way a manager makes thousands of tables in a factory. Only far more wonderfully, because God makes *live* things, so that they can make one another. [*L. 48, Pt. 3.*] God makes the wood, God makes the iron—and God makes the carpenter ; he makes the factory, and the workmen, and the foreman, and the manager. And God is the supreme Manager.

“MAKER,” II.—IMMANENCE

I.—IMMANENCE AND TRANSCENDENCE

[The heading of a Point is of course always written on a blackboard, or at least spelt out.]

LAST time we were discussing what I may call the Carpenter's Creed. The world is like a table: somebody must have made it. Then we said—That is too simple. It is more like a table made in a great factory, made by hundreds of people and machines, with a Manager looking after it.

But of course that is too simple also. I made it simple, so that you could understand it: if I had talked like a book on science, you wouldn't have listened, you know! But if last time a learned scientist had come in and stood at the back, and you had said to him afterwards—“Please, Professor Highbrow, what did you think of that Lesson?” he would have said probably something like this:—“It is all very well, but Mr. [T.'s name] forgot all about *immanence*.” Then you might say, “Please, sir, what's *eminence*?” And he would say, “I didn't say *eminence*: I said *immanence*. It means that God is *in* everything.” And you would say, “Oh!”

If you had wanted to make a smart answer, you might have said, “Well, God is both eminent and immanent then; because ‘eminent’ means ‘exalted’ and ‘immanent’ means ‘dwelling in,’ as thought dwells in my brain.” Only the proper words are *immanence* and *transcendence*. Transcendence means high up above everything.

But I didn't forget. Only I didn't want to make it too difficult. It is quite true that God is not only like

a transcendent manager who directs a wonderful factory. He is also like the “immanent” power *in* the factory. If it is worked by electricity, God is like that—the mysterious invisible electricity that works all the engines. Supposing the manager could generate all the electricity out of himself—as you can sometimes get electric crackles out of your hair on a dry day—that would give you some idea.

But, of course, creation is infinitely more wonderful than that. Suppose the electricity could *think*, and manage all the machinery itself, that would give you a better idea.

II.—THE ETHER

You see, I have to give you very rough analogies (sort of parables) to get any kind of notion of the truth. But two great facts of nature help us to understand. One is the ether, of which we spoke once before. It is an invisible something, far more curious and subtle than the air. The air is as clumsy as a brickbat compared with it. It fills all space—all the space between us and the sun, for instance. The light and heat of the sun are really inconceivably small waves—like tiny, tiny ripples of the ether. If there were no ether there would be no light or heat; you wouldn’t *see* the sun at all. The ether also fills your own body; it fills this wood [*T. thumps*]; it fills everything. Scientists know hardly anything about it; they can’t see it, or feel it, or examine it in any way. They only know that it *must* exist [pace *Einstein*]. Now that discovery helps us to understand about God: we can’t see him, but we can see his work; we know he *must* exist, and must be everywhere, *in* everything, as well as, like the manager, *above* everything.

Electricity is really some peculiar action in the ether. Matter—this desk, for instance [*T. thumps it*], or this hand, or the ground, or the air—everything material, is, they have discovered, really a form of electricity. That was a wonderful discovery. If you could be tiny enough to see the atoms of which this desk, or the air, or your bodies are made, you would find that they are not really solid, but wonderful centres of electricity, always moving. This desk only *seems* solid because we can’t

see things as small as atoms or molecules. If you were infinitely tiny—far tinier than anything we can see through the microscope—you could walk into that brick [*or piece of wood, or whatever is near*], and see the atoms, each like a bubble, with the inside all whirling about. That is excessively wonderful—far more wonderful than anything in the Bible. But it is quite true: it is a scientific fact, put into simple language.

Well, you can think of the ether as being like the spirit-body of God the Creator; and you can think of electricity as being like his hands—that is to say, like his power at work.

III.—LIFE

Man is made of body, soul, and spirit. I wonder if we can think of anything to give us an idea of the *soul* of God?

Well, think of Life. Nobody has the least idea what life really is. It is a tremendous mystery. But everyone knows the difference between an egg that hatches and an addled egg. One has life; the other hasn't. Why? Nobody knows. When you sow seeds, some come up; others don't. The seeds that come up are alive. And, because they are alive, they have the power to grow up and make other seeds. When you come to think about it, that is inconceivably wonderful.

One tiny seed produces a red rose, another a yellow rose—there are hundreds of distinct kinds—another, a peony with white petals; another, a peony with bright red petals and gold-crimson petaloids; another, a plant that eats flies! Why? Does the plant *think*? There is thought somewhere. And so, of course, it is with every living thing—all more and more wonderful, and man the most wonderful of all. There is life everywhere, which is like the soul of God; and there is *thought* or *purpose* everywhere, which surely must be the spirit of God, the mind of God.

For you can't have thought and purpose without a mind. So you can think of the all-pervading ether and of electricity as like God's body and hands; of life as like his soul; and of the thought and purpose of Nature as really his spirit, the work of his mind.

IV.—SCIENCE STUDIES METHODS

One could talk on about this for years. But you don't want more than a few simple ideas to go upon ; and then, when you read difficult books later on, you can get more knowledge, and make your ideas more and more exact.

But it is all so difficult ; and the more we discover, the more complicated, of course, it becomes ; and that means that different people have different ideas. It also means that scientific ideas change ; and if we try to explain about God too much on scientific lines, our explanation gets out of date. A hundred years ago the scientific people were all wrong, because they thought that all things had been made once for all, just as they are now, and had never changed [*Linnaeus and Cuvier : Doctrine of fixity of species*]. The Church believed them (and they believed the Church), and taught Special Creation ; and so the Church was wrong, too, except a few (like John Wesley) [*Works*, 3rd ed. IV. 56-61, 85-104], who even then had got the idea of evolution—that things change and develop.

It was not the Church's duty to teach natural science. She could only listen to the men of science ; and no mistakes of theologians have been anything like as great as the mistakes of the men of science, who in the Middle Ages had no science at all, and have since toiled bravely but with many mistakes along a very difficult road.

So if you stick fast to the old simple truth that the world is made by God, you will be quite safe. If anyone ever says to you, " Science has shown that this is not true," you may be pretty sure that he doesn't know much about science.

Science has shown us a little more of *how* the world was made, and is still being made. It has discovered something about the machinery (to use a clumsy and inadequate word)—about the method, the *process*. But what has been discovered only shows that creation is far more wonderful than our forefathers could imagine. Darwin, for instance, found out what is called Natural Selection, which started a whole chain of discoveries, and has itself been much modified. But Darwin never thought that because the world goes on developing

itself, one improvement leading to another—he never thought this proved there is no *mind* directing it all. In fact he said : “ Natural selection . . . transcends in an incomparable degree the contrivances and adaptations which the most fertile imagination of the most imaginative man could suggest.”

And since Darwin's time the theory of Evolution has itself evolved. It becomes less material, more spiritual every year, more full of the idea of thought ; less and less mechanical, more full of *purpose* and design.

Many people used to have an idea that men of science did not believe in God. It was quite untrue, even in the most irreligious times. The greatest men of science have nearly always been devout believers in God. But a generation ago there was a good deal of unbelief, mainly among smaller men. It generally took the form of materialism. They thought there was no spirit or mind, only matter. Nowadays it has begun to be rather stupid to be a materialist.

So many new and wonderful things have been discovered that the old idea of Special Creation has gone. And explanations can't be so easy and simple as they used to be. The world is not like a table : God is not like a carpenter, any more than he is like a conjurer. He is the God in the machine, and the machine is infinitely large (and small), and is all alive.

Nature is his living garment. He is immanent in Nature. Yet he is also transcendent, far above all worlds in the heaven of his glory.

MAKER OF WATER

"H EAVEN and earth" means the whole universe; and this planet in the universe, which we call the world. Too big for one Lesson! [*T. smiles brightly*!]. There was once a sergeant who said after supper, "I will tell you the story of how I got my stripes." By 10 o'clock half the men had fallen asleep; by 11 only two were left awake. By 11.30 they too were snoring. But he went on all night. Well, we won't!

So let us take a very simple part of the world as a sample. Not animals, not land, but *water*. Let us try and see what "Maker of water" would mean. Water is so simple—just the same everywhere!

One drop of water instead of the whole universe. Am I making it simple for you?

Well, a drop of water consists of molecules; each molecule is made up of two atoms of hydrogen combined with one atom of oxygen, two gases joined together in a mysterious way. In one single drop there are about a million million million million molecules. That is too difficult! Not simple at all! We will take the easiest part about water—its properties. But we've only time for a few main facts.

I.—THE VITAL LIQUID

First, then, water is absolutely necessary to break up the earth's surface, and it has the most wonderful chemical properties, by which it dissolves the various salts and minerals and fertilises the soil. "Water is capable of dissolving all natural substances." If it had not this power, we should have nothing whatever to eat.

(2). Water is absolutely necessary to all life. If you

take a plant and dry it up, it dies. So would any living creature, or any speck of living matter. More than two-thirds of our own bodies are just water. If anyone says to you, "O, dry up!" you can truthfully reply "But if I really did dry up I should only weigh two stone instead of six, and, besides, I should be a dead mummy!"

This curious liquid, then, to which we are so used, because we find it everywhere, is absolutely necessary to life. *And (3) it has to be liquid.* "Of course it's liquid," you say. Not at all: there's no "of course" about it. Clouds are water, and they aren't a liquid. Ice is water which has not reached melting-point. You know if you melt lead, it's only at a certain point that it becomes liquid; you have to heat it to 327.7°C. , then it melts; but if you go on heating it up to about 1500° it boils and turns into vapour. So it is with water: it is only *under certain conditions* that it is liquid. And supposing it needed a temperature of melting lead to make water liquid! That would really be hell! But not only temperature. If the earth were smaller, the water would all evaporate; and if the atmosphere were lighter the water would evaporate. The attraction of the earth keeps it liquid, the weight of the air keeps it liquid—and other things besides. A very careful adjustment is needed to make water liquid, and thus to make life possible.

That looks as if some great Mind had carefully worked it out, doesn't it?—as if a divine Person was arranging these delicate adjustments. [*Ps. 104⁶⁻¹⁴ is very suitable to-day.*]

II.—CURIOUS BEHAVIOUR OF COLD WATER

"But," you say, "water freezes; it is solid sometimes, like lead." Come along, then! Now when lead cools down it gets smaller, it contracts. But water has a peculiarity which is absolutely unique. We don't know what there is about a molecule of water which makes it act unlike anything else; but at 39°F. it ceases to contract, and then begins to *expand*. It then expands rapidly, and at 32°F. it becomes solid, and is much expanded—it *freezes*, as we say. [*For further*

details see Dr. J. M. Wilson's " Problems of Religion and Science," p. 198.] Now when things become bigger, *expand*, they grow lighter, as a feather is lighter than a bullet ; but when they contract they grow heavier, as a piece of bread does if you contract it by rolling it into a pellet—and then it sinks. But if water contracted when it got colder, what would happen ? The very cold water, below 39° , would then be heavier. It would sink to the bottom, and all cold seas and lakes would become colder and colder, and the ice would sink like lead—one layer of ice after another—and everything in the water would die. And the water would be turned into fathoms and fathoms of solid ice, and the heat of the sun would never get to it. This would happen if water contracted as it got colder, like other substances.

But ice is a strange exception to the rule ; it *floats*. Yes. Once a traveller from Burma came back to that hot country, and he told the king all sorts of lies about the places he had seen, and the king believed them all. Then he said, " In China, when it is very cold, men can walk on the water." " What !!! " said the king. " It freezes, O King," said the traveller. " What do you mean by ' freezes ' ? " said the king. " Get out of my sight, begetter of lies ! " He didn't know that water has this peculiar habit. We do. But doesn't it look as if Some One had put it in that law of Nature on purpose ?

Not that this is all. You know how suddenly lead melts. If ice and snow melted like that, then, when a thaw came, the water would pour down in cataracts and flood the earth. So water has another unique quality : although ice melts so easily, it takes *longer to melt* than any other substance, i.e. it has more *latent heat*.

III.—AS A HEATING APPARATUS

(a). LATENT HEAT.—This extraordinary power of latent heat continues when water evaporates. The tropical seas evaporate a great deal : the vapour rises and forms clouds, and is blown by the wind in all directions. This vapour is fairly cool, but it *contains* an enormous amount of latent heat. You know how sometimes, just when you are expecting some skating

the rains falls, and at once a thaw sets in. This is because every pint of rain that falls gives out as much heat as would be needed to boil $5\frac{1}{2}$ pints of ice—to raise that much ice from freezing to boiling-point : 15 inches of rain give out as much heat in an average county [Nottingham] as if all the coal raised annually in England were burnt there in a year. All the heat used in the tropics to make the clouds is given back over the world when the rain falls, because of the extraordinary amount of latent heat in every speck of vapour. Thus the temperature of the world is always being equalised—the hot places being cooled, the cold places being warmed. Water-vapour is the most wonderful heating apparatus. Suppose you tried to invent a heating apparatus that would never get hot itself, and yet would carry heat from one end of the world to the other ?

(b). SPECIFIC HEAT.—Water has more latent heat than any other substance. It is also peculiar in having (next to hydrogen) far more *specific* heat. That means, it takes far more heat to warm it : e.g. thirty times as much heat is needed to heat 1 lb. of water one degree as 1 lb. of mercury : if you put a pot of mercury and a pot of water side by side on the same stove, it takes the water half an hour to become as hot as the mercury does in one minute. Water takes in this enormous proportion of heat in the tropics, and then, by its latent power, it carries this heat to other parts of the world.

(c). RADIANT HEAT.—But this heating apparatus also acts the part of a kind of magical blanket to keep the earth warm. The invisible vapour in the air lets the radiant heat of the sun in, and then refuses to let it out again ! Suppose you had to invent something to do that ? Well, vapour is quite transparent to light and to *luminous* heat rays ; but it is very opaque to *dark* heat waves. During the day, the sun radiates luminous heat into the earth ; this heat passes easily through the vapour particles in the air. During the night, the earth has to radiate heat back again ; but the vapour particles won't let the heat pass through them now—they stop the dark heat and absorb it, and act as a light comfortable blanket.

IV.—DEW

Is it a pity that the earth does lose some heat in the night? No! If it did not, there would be no *dew*. In clear hot weather, everything would be parched up, if it were not for the dew. Stones, leaves, grass must be chilled before they can condense vapour—turn it into water; then the vapour rising from the ground, and the vapour breathed out by the plants themselves, and a little of the vapour in the air, is chilled and condensed, and forms the sweet refreshing dew.

The last thing I shall mention is so important and obvious that you will have guessed. . . . Yes! *Rain*.

V.—RAIN

Aqueous vapour has powers that make it the watering-can of the whole earth. Suppose *you* had to supply millions of tons of pure water to mid-Siberia, and were only given salt water thousands of miles away in the Pacific and Atlantic to do it with? What a water-company you would want, what an apparatus! Now the sea is salt. But the vapour from the sea is pure. It is also extraordinarily light (water thus becomes lighter than air): therefore it rises, sometimes miles high. It drifts with the wind, as clouds; and it travels all over the dry earth. Then it condenses with the cold, and falls as rain thousands of miles away. And the rain shapes the earth, and makes the earth alive, and fills it with food for all flesh. Then the rain comes trickling back by rivers to the sea. If you could see God with a gigantic magic watering-pot, would you not believe that he is the maker of heaven and earth? But this is far more wonderful than any clumsy watering-pot. Every drop of water has just the right properties—some of them unique peculiarities which no other substance has, such as expanding when it gets colder—exceptions brought in just exactly where they are needed. What a stupendous device! I have taken water because it is simple and easy, compared with the earth, or heaven, or the animal kingdom. Yet, even so, I have had to leave out many things.

VI.—THE SUPREME TOUCH

But there is one thing more I ought to say. Men make factories, and they are very proud of their intelligence ; but the factories nowadays are hideous. In God's water-works he has thrown in as an extra the most exquisite beauty. Clouds, and rainbows, and sunsets he throws in for men to see ; and the water forms glassy pools, and blue seas, and dancing streams, and spraying waterfalls ; and it carves winding rivers, and shapes the climbing hills, and throws mantles of emerald, fold upon fold, gemmed with flowers, upon the meadows. God makes us a present of all that loveliness.

But I don't think he regards it as an extra.

“OF HEAVEN AND EARTH”

I.—UNITY OF SCIENCE

LAST time we talked about . . . Water, because it was the simplest thing we could think of. We didn't speak of the rest of the world, nor of that incalculable wonder, the universe of the stars. If we did, we should have to speak of all the sciences—astronomy, geology, zoology, and dozens of others. Now it takes a clever man all his life to learn two or three sciences. So we simply can't begin here. Some of you will take up natural science; and you will find that in all the hundreds of branches there are the same wonderful contrivances and adaptations as in water—the same evidence of *thought* behind it all. Natural science is a most fascinating subject; and everybody ought to know something about it. The ordinary person can't know much; and I hardly dared talk about it to you, for fear of making mistakes. But we are learning at school nowadays a few of the more general and important truths, because we need to have a right point of view in thinking of the world. We mustn't think like ignorant men. We mustn't look out on the world with eyes half-blind. If we do, all our ideas will be wrong.

But there is one general principle in all science which is so easy and so important that I will tell it to you. The more scientists discover, the more they find they can trace all things back to One Thing. They find all the lines converging [*gesture*] towards unity; and the faith of science is in Unity. Science examines things and arranges things. It does not do more than this. But in examining and arranging it finds *causes* for things—reasons why things happen; and then it finds that the

causes are produced by some cause behind (e.g. the cause of your writing is your muscles ; the cause of that is your will ; the cause of your will is my telling you to ; the cause of that is that I am engaged to try to teach you). Science is always working back towards one single First Cause. For instance, matter and energy used to seem to be absolutely different things. This [*T. slaps something*] is matter : this [*T. whirls his hand round*] is energy. They seem quite different, don't they ? But now scientists tell us that matter is really a form of energy—strange as it seems : that the atoms of which this is composed [*T. touches his watch-case*] are inconceivably small ; but (as we said two weeks ago) if you could see them, you would find they are whirling centres of energy—of negative electricity. So, you see, such different things as matter and energy are brought back to one thing. And it begins to look as if what we call electricity is One Cause behind the others. Perhaps we shall find another cause still further back.

Now in *our* science, the science of religion, which is called theo-logy, we look for a Cause behind everything, a First Cause, which is not a thing, but is a Person. God the Maker of Heaven and Earth. The heathen used to see many gods—many causes : we have found One God. And we are sure that One God is the One Cause which natural science demands.

II.—UNIVERSE

The ancients, when they spoke of Heaven and Earth, meant this world and all that is in the sky—that is the entire Universe. The ancient Greeks and Jews looked out at the sky and they naturally thought of it as a blue dome—like the dome of St. Paul's as you look up at it inside, only much larger. It is called in Genesis by the curious name of firmament—something firm and hard, as if it were beaten out of metal. They thought that the mountains, which they could sometimes see in the distance, supported the base of this dome—like the piers and walls of St. Paul's. Above the dome they thought were "the waters which were above the firmament" [*Gn. 1*⁷] ; and they thought that windows were sometimes opened, so that torrents of rain came through

[*Gn.* 7¹¹]. They thought also that there was another lot of water under the flat earth, and all around it. They hadn't found out all that we know about water ! And, of course, they thought that the sun, moon and stars were wonderful lanterns, “ the greater light to rule the day, and the lesser light to rule the night ” [*Gn.* 1¹⁶]. *From our point of view*, so they are. We owe our existence every moment to that greater light. But men have been ever since finding out more and more about—

“ That inverted dome we call the sky,
Whereunder, crawling, cooped, we live and die.”

And it is not a dome at all ! If you look at the sea coast from a ship, you say, “ There is land. I see hills, and under one hill are some whitish specks.” And as night falls, you say, “ There are twinkling lights coming out under the hill, and one big light that flashes, and then goes out, and then flashes again.” Your ship draws nearer to the harbour ; and lo ! the whitish specks are . . . houses, the twinkling lights are lamp-posts, and the flash is a light-house at the harbour mouth. So by telescopes, and the spectrum, and other means, men have drawn nearer to the Heavens. That is the science of Astronomy. Instead of a big dome, we find inconceivable space, with great suns millions of billions miles away, which are so far off that we call them stars. Our great telescopes can show, it is calculated, at least 50,000,000 stars. What a number ! So many that only a million and a quarter of the brightest are being catalogued. The nearest star to the earth is called Alpha Centauri : it is some twenty-five million million miles away. An express train, running at sixty miles an hour, would take fifty millions of years to reach it !

Well ! all this means that “ heaven ” is inconceivably more wonderful than the ancients imagined. Yet they were dumbfounded even by what they knew. And they were quite aware that they knew but little. “ Thy way is in the sea, and thy paths in the great waters : and thy footsteps are not known.” [*Ps.* 77¹⁹]. What splendid poetry that is ! We also know but little, though we have discovered much. We also can only express our deepest thoughts in poetry like this :—“ The heavens declare

the glory of God : and the firmament sheweth his handiwork" [Ps. 19¹. *A good Psalm for singing here is the short and lovely Ps. 8*].

III.—THE NEXT WORLD

But unfortunately the word "Heaven" is used in two quite different senses. When we say, "I hope to go to Heaven when I die," we don't mean, "I hope to take an express train to Alpha Centauri, and arrive there in fifty million years."

Heaven is used in a material sense of the sky and stars. It is also used in a spiritual sense, meaning the next world, or the highest part of the next world. So, to avoid confusion, let us agree *never to use the word Heaven except when we mean the next world*. When we mean the material heaven, we will speak of the sky, or space, or the stars.

The ancients did not distinguish between the two. They just looked up at the lovely blue sky, and thought "God is there." And they thought that the abode of the blessed was somewhere there. Very likely they were right. Very likely the spiritual heaven is just above us, and we can't see it for the same reason that fishes in deep water can't see *us*. We live in a different medium—in a material and not a spiritual medium. Even when fishes do catch a glimpse of us, they have not the slightest idea what we are like, or what the air is like. Our spiritual heaven is, I think, just about us and near above us. But of course Heaven may extend all over space ; or it may be above our ideas of space altogether. The stars may be as much in heaven as we are. Only I do hate those silly "children's hymns" which speak of God and the blessed saints as "Above the bright blue sky," or "In the bright place far away," or "Up above the stars so high." They are meaningless and have no sense. The blue sky is not the floor of heaven ; and the stars are not little chinks in the floor through which the light comes. We don't have to travel for millions of years beyond Alpha Centauri before we can find Christ. Phrases like this are of course metaphors. But metaphors ought not to be misleading. God is always near us ; and Heaven is round about us.

IV.—GLIMPSES

Sometimes heaven is opened a little bit, and people see some of those who are in it. Our Lord said this would happen: “Verily, verily, I say unto you, ye shall see the heaven opened, and the messengers (angels) of God ascending and descending upon the Son of Man” [*Jn.* 1⁵¹]. And at the Resurrection, the disciples saw Jesus himself several times. At Christ’s Birth, and Baptism, and Transfiguration, too, we read how heaven was opened in various ways; and also when S. Paul saw Jesus on the way to Damascus. Heaven is often opened to people’s sight when they are dying: you remember, this happened to S. Stephen—“Behold, I see the heavens opened . . .” [*Ac.* 7⁵⁶]. It is a great mistake to think this only happened in “New Testament times.” It has happened ever since; and it happens to-day. We don’t see *all* that goes on around us. Even in material things, our eyes can only see a small section of the light-rays: most of the waves of light we can’t see, because they are either too quick or too slow for our eyes to catch. Nor can our ears catch very high notes or very low ones. Only a few men can hear the very high cry of the bat. Probably insects utter much higher notes, which only they can hear. We know that some of them can call to one another somehow, though we can detect nothing.

Much more, then, are we unable to see or hear the higher spiritual things that go on around us—not insects below us, but saints and angels above us, and God above all. Only “above” does not of course mean so many miles above. Any more than when I say, “Brown is above Jones in mathematics”—I don’t mean that Brown is sitting on Jones’s head, or floating somewhere near the ceiling. I mean it, of course, not in a material but in a . . . spiritual, yes, and more important sense. We men get glimpses sometimes of Heaven, which is quite near us, and of the happy people in it. It is rather like the fishes in the pond getting a glimpse of the squire and his daughters as they go for a walk.

ALL THINGS VISIBLE AND INVISIBLE

I.—THE SPIRITUAL WORLD

IN the other Creed, the . . . Nicene Creed, these words of our title to-day come in, after "heaven and earth." They make it quite clear that Christians believe God to be the creator not only of all material things, but also of all . . . spiritual things; not only of this world, but also of the next world; not only of the Universe, but also of Heaven. So I think, if we were sitting to-day as a General Council of the whole Christian Church, and had authority to alter the Apostles' Creed, we might perhaps really improve it by cutting out "heaven and earth," and substituting "visible and invisible," or better still "all things spiritual and material." That would be a more exact scientific statement, though it would not sound so well as "Heaven and Earth."

You remember how we said (in *L.* 35) "the things which are seen are temporal [that is, they belong to time, are temporary, and wear out]; but the things which are not seen are eternal" [*2 Cor.* 4¹⁸]. The things which matter in the end are the invisible, eternal things. *You* are invisible. It is dreadfully sad to see anyone's body break up, when they die; but it does not really matter in the end, because their real selves, their soul and spirit, can't die. "To die" does not mean to end. It means to *travel*. The great artist, Albert Dürer, was the son of a goldsmith: he had seventeen brothers and sisters! He died at the beautiful old city of Nürnberg (in 1528), where you can still see the jolly old house in which he lived. The temporal part of him, his body, was buried, of course; but on his tombstone they cut one Latin word—"Emigravit"—which means . . . "he

has emigrated." There was another man, not so long ago, a blacksmith, and his forge wore out, and *he* emigrated, but only to the United States. And there he became a clever engineer, and because of his clever experiments the telephone was invented. It was invented by Graham Bell in 1876, and he had also emigrated to America, after having been at Edinburgh and London Universities.

II.—THE MATERIAL WORLD IMPERFECT

The visible things are lovely and wonderful. Meadows and mountains, rivers and trees, grass and flowers, and the rolling majesty of the sea, and the clouds billowing above ; and tiny insects, birds and beasts, men and women. We have made our towns so ugly during the last hundred years ; but think of the country ! There is a proverb—" God made the country, but man made the town." Nowadays it often looks as if the devil had made the town ! But the country, how glorious it is ! And at night we look up at the stars in the deep, dark sky—millions of *years* away.

Nature is God's picture. It expresses the mind of God, as the picture does the mind of an artist. If you go to the National Gallery and look at Dürer's " Portrait of a Senator," you can see something of Dürer's mind—e.g. that he was a fine, strong man, but sad and melancholy. But in Nature you can see God's love of happiness ; you can see how he loves to make all sorts of interesting and amusing animals ; you can see how he loves health, and gracefulness, and bounding strength ; you can see how fond he is of beauty of every conceivable kind. The greatest artist is, after all, only trying to show you some little bit of God's beauty. He just sits in the studio of the Great Painter, the supreme Drawing-Master, and copies a little bit. You know it is *impossible* to paint a landscape really like Nature. You can't, for instance, get any colour nearly as bright as sunlight upon grass ; you can only take some yellow paint (not green), and make it look as bright as you can.

But there is a curious thing about God's picture, about Nature. It is never perfect. That has puzzled people

a great deal. The world is full of things that seem cruel, of death and corruption, and nasty parasites—

“ Little fleas have lesser fleas upon their backs to bite 'em,
And lesser fleas have other fleas, and so *ad infinitum*.”

Yet the world is so marvellously, unthinkably wonderful. We hinted at this last time ; and science books are full of the millions and the billions, and the amazing marvels of Nature. How is this ? We don't quite know ; but we know more than our great-grandfathers did.

Think of it in this way. You see a drawing of a bust by a clever drawing-master. It isn't a great or wonderful picture a bit ; but it's remarkably perfect (as we say), well-finished—it couldn't be done better. Then you go to the National Gallery, or the Millbank Gallery, you see a sketch by Turner—a great blazing blob for the sun, scraggles of gold and turquoise for clouds, smudges of sapphire for the sea. “ Hallo ! ” you say, “ Turner was a genius ! ” Greater than the drawing-master ? Ask the drawing-master. He throws up his hands [*gesture*]. Then I look again at the Turner. Well, but I can see the *canvas* ; and, look, this corner is just covered with scrawls ! O, I see, the picture is only a sketch—*it is not finished*.

III.—A GROWING OR PROCESS

Now that is what our grandfathers did not know about the world. They saw that it is imperfect ; but they could not explain *why*. They just had to have faith, and patience. Then came Darwin and the other great scientists. They had their faults, and didn't discover everything ; but they did discover what we call . . . development, or evolution. They discovered that the world is not a fixed thing [*static*] like a picture ; but a living, growing thing [*dynamic*] like a tree. It is not finished. But it is not like an unfinished picture : it is like an unfinished tree. *Of course* a tree *has* to be unfinished. It will have more leaves next year, and more branches ! If it were finished it would be dead. The world is a *process*—always going on, like a factory.

At first people laughed at Darwin. “ He says we are all descended from monkeys,” they said. Well, we are

not exactly descended from monkeys: they are only our cousins; but suppose we were—and that's near enough. Suppose you had peeped at the world when there were no animals higher than lemurs and monkeys. Suppose you had summoned up courage to speak to God. You might have said: "Isn't this rather a chattering, ridiculous world, with nothing but monkeys in the trees, throwing coco-nuts at my head?" Then God might have said, "Wait a bit."

"Wait a bit, and you will see men on the earth. The world is growing, is developing, becoming something better. The things that seem to you cruelties or mistakes are part of the method; they are necessary to the process. Wait a bit, and you will see men on the earth." And you, looking at creation, moving on as in a kinema, would see men, after a time. "But they are nasty, naked savages!" you would say.

But wait a bit. Here come the men of Ancient Egypt and Babylon, and of China; here come the men of Greece and Rome; and here—yes, here come Christ and his Apostles!

Yes, the world is a mighty process. It is still going on. Look around. There are many evil things still. But cheer up! It is a process. Put your strength on the side of justice, and knowledge, and kindness, and help God's process on. "We are God's fellow-workers." We can help in the process!

When our grandfathers first discovered the process, many of them thought at first that God had not made the world, because the world seemed to them as if it made itself. Living things seemed to *adapt* themselves in a blind sort of way. "Adaptation" they said, "natural selection"—this explains everthing! But now we know more. We know, e.g. that there is a power called ortho-genesis [easy to remember!], which means, roughly, that living things always tend in the right direction. Everything is moving upwards, and always has. There is a *purpose* in the process, there is a *mind* in the process.

IV.—ETERNAL LIFE

But still the earth is probably wearing out [*in spite of radio-activity*], though very, very slowly. Once a

scientific lecturer said that the world would come to an end in 50 million years. A silly man in the audience thought he said 15 million years, and, anyhow, was very much frightened. He forgot that he wouldn't be alive in 15 million years! At the end of the evening he went up to the lecturer. "Did you say the world would come to an end in 15 million years?" he asked, in great anxiety. "No," replied the lecturer, "I said *fifty* million years." "O," said the man "what a relief!"

Well, it wouldn't matter to you or me if the world burst up to-morrow. We should only change our bodies, and go on living better than ever under new conditions. Instead of our natural body we should have a spiritual body, as S. Paul said when he thought the end of the world was coming in a few years [1 Cor. 15⁴⁴], which he did at first, though afterwards he changed his mind. You needn't be afraid if a wandering dark star were to dash into the earth to-morrow. It would make a difference to your body, of course; but it wouldn't make any difference to *you*. You would go on just the same. Nor would it bring any fearful Judgment Day. The Judgment Day is eternal, like all the invisible things. It is going on now. God is always doing justice, and separating good from evil.

Justice! But is there justice in the world? That gentle little baby rabbit which your dog killed. Those poor women and children whom the Turks slaughtered, year after year, in Armenia. That dear little girl . . . who went through so much pain and then died. And all the nasty, selfish people who are so well and prosperous?

Yes, there *must* be justice. This beautiful world would be a nightmare if there wasn't. And the world is not a nightmare. But you don't get complete justice in this world. Millions of lives are broken in this process of development. You only get things pointing towards justice. Your own mind, your own conscience point to it. So there is an invisible world, the next (which means the nearest) world. There all will be made up, and justice will triumph.

THOUGHT AND EXPRESSION

I.—DIFFERENT KINDS OF THOUGHT

I WANT you to get a little deeper into this problem of Creation to-day. So please buck up, and sit tight. The reason is, I don't want you to have baby-ideas about the world and about God—the two important things. Many people have baby-ideas [*even in the pulpit !*], because they were never taught grown-up ideas.

I want you to think about *Thought* to-day. And you can't think about thought unless you are thoughtful in your thinking! Can you? Now, what is thought? You've got a sort of idea, and that will do. No one has ever explained it. It is a mystery, just as Life is a mystery, just as God himself is a mystery.

But I want you first to understand that Thought is much bigger than you think. For instance, if you feel jolly, that is thought, though it's not the same kind of thought as when you do arithmetic (which is not always the same as feeling jolly). Joy, or sorrow, is a *feeling*, an emotion. It is inarticulate thought.

Then there is *unconscious* or subconscious thought. How do you breathe? You have been breathing all the time! Did you think about it? No; but it was part of your mind that was doing it—it was your unconscious thought. Now all take a deep breath . . . Ha! That time your *conscious* thought did it. All your lives you are doing crowds of things by that unconscious thought, which is not in your ordinary mind, but in your undermind. For instance, you eat a plate of mutton and potatoes and some apple-pudding. What happens then? You *digest* it. But what is digestion?

It is a most wonderful mystery. You turn that mutton and pudding into bone, and muscle, and nerve—into the bone, and muscle, and nerve of your own body. There is a miracle for you! If I were to give you a piece of pudding, and say, "Please turn that into bone," how clever you would be if you could do it! But you *are* doing it, all the time. Your subconscious mind is doing it by digestion. If you could turn a bundle of hay into a glass of milk what a wonder you would be! You could make your fortune as a conjurer. But a cow does it. Look at her, peacefully whisking her tail in the meadow. She doesn't think she is clever. But she's doing this wonder all the time. And no one can tell you how she does it.

II.—THE HIGHER KIND OF THOUGHT

O yes, animals have got thought, though it's mostly unconscious or subconscious. There is the wonderful kind of thought which we call *Instinct*, for instance. There is a sea-bird, a species of tern, which never goes further north than the Gulf of Mexico. Professor Watkins, of the John Hopkins University, caught half a dozen of these birds, marked each with a different coloured paint, marked each of their nests with the same paint: then he sent them 1000 miles north in cages, down in the hold of a steamer, to New York. There they were set free, and in five days most of them came back—though they had never seen any bit of the way. He found them quietly sitting on their nests again! They had found their way—by instinct, we say. But that instinct is a very wonderful kind of inarticulate thought.

Yet thought of that sort, marvellous as it is, is only an inferior kind of thought. How much more marvellous then the thought, the conscious thought, of men must be. Our thought, as we sit here. And, far above that, the great thought of great minds. And, infinitely above that, the thought of God himself.

III.—THOUGHT EXPRESSES ITSELF

Well, although no one can explain Thought, we can say that it is something which always expresses itself,

and that we only know about it by its expression. If I smile at you [*T. smiles*], that is *my* expression of my thought. If I shake my fist at you, that is another expression of thought—an unpleasant thought this time. If I say, "*Sit still!*" these two words are the expression of thought.

It is very important to remember that we can only think by words (or by some figure, or symbol, or image). You can't think—consciously, I mean, of course—except by words. Try. Think of the reason why you go to school. . . . I can tell you the words in your mind as your thought works:—"So that I may learn things." Words like that were in your mind. You couldn't think without them. Or if I say, "How is tea made?"—try and *think*—at once your mind says, "You take tea-leaves . . . boiling water," and so on, or perhaps it makes a picture of the tea being made. Our conscious human thought expresses itself and works (*a*) through some kind of Language, or else (*b*) through Art. If I say, "What do you think of the Prime Minister?" you might say, "He is a clever man." That would be language—words. Or you might draw a picture of him. That would be art. Or you might hum, "For he's a jolly good fellow." That would be art too.

So then our conscious, articulate thought cannot be conceived of apart from its expression either (1) in language of some sort, or (2) in art of some sort. Thought always expresses itself. It is "an inscrutable, directive power, seeking to express and thus to realise itself" [*Sir William Barrett, "Creative Thought"*; cf. *B. Croce, "Estetica," I, Intuition is expression: nothing more, but also nothing less*]. Our subconscious thought, also, we only know of through its expression: for example, as we were saying, your digestion of a pudding is the expression of unconscious thought. Your subconscious thought is *doing* something. It is turning pudding into bone.

Thought, then, of all kinds, is the mysterious power which directs things. It is always trying to express itself; and the highest kind of thought, our conscious thought, always does express itself in one of two ways—either by language (even when we are not speaking, but only thinking to ourselves), or else by art.

IV.—GOD'S THOUGHT EXPRESSED IN NATURE

Now the thought of God must be like all kinds of thought put together, as it were, and infinitely greater than ours. This thought of God also expresses itself. How? (1) By Creation. Creation is the *art* of God. And (2) by Inspiration—that is, by our conscience, and when God inspires men to think good thoughts, to say true words, to do fine acts. Inspiration is the *language* of God, speaking in us.

But how do we know that the thought of God is expressed in Creation, in the world, in the universe? Like this. Suppose you go to a telegraph office, and watch the needle move. If you understand the Morse code you can read the message. You can understand it: the message is intelligible. You can't see the operator at the other end; but you know he must be there. Why? Because the message shows that there is a *mind* at the other end. The telegraphic needle expresses the thought of the operator.

So it is with the world, with Nature. When scientific men study Nature, they often don't find what they expected; they don't always find what they like; but what they find is sensible, is intelligible. It fits in. There is a mind behind it; there is an operator at the other end. For instance, they investigate people's eyes: they find that the eye is a marvellously designed optical instrument, of extraordinary complexity. Then they study other animals' eyes: the extraordinary "bifocal" eye of certain water-beetles, for instance (and of the Brazilian fish, anableps): these creatures have upper lenses in their eyes looking above the surface of the water, and lower lenses looking down into the water. There is a mind behind all this, a wonderful mind. So it is with all scientific work. If there weren't intelligence in Nature—an orderly system—there would be no intelligible, systematic science. There would be nothing that could be arranged and classified: scientific men would be in a state of confusion. But they are never put to confusion. The more they discover, the more it all works out, and fits in together. They can't see the great Operator. What they see isn't *like* Him, any more

than the telegraphic needle is like the operator—it isn't in the least. But they do see something of his thought, of his mind.

A message—an expression—comes through Nature. Our eyes cannot see the world of God, the real spiritual world; but we *can* see the signs in the world of Nature around us. And they show us *Thought*. That thought must be like ours, or we could not understand it at all. You couldn't understand the telegraph operator if his thought were not like yours, if his intelligence were not related to your intelligence. So God's thought is related to ours, his intelligence is related to our intelligence. In fact, He *is* our relation. He is our Father, and we are made in his image.

CREATIVE THOUGHT

LAST time we tried to think about *Thought*. We agreed to include all kinds of mind-work, or mental operation—Conscious Thought, Subconscious Thought . . . Instinct . . . Feeling or emotion. All these are different kinds of thought ; all come from the . . . mind.

We said that Thought is a most mysterious thing ; and that we can only follow it through its . . . *Expression*. We said that our higher conscious Thought expresses itself in two ways, and can only exist at all in these two ways :—1 . . . Language, 2 . . . Art.

Then we said that the Thought of God must be expressing itself also. We said that God's Thought expresses itself in two ways : 1. By . . . Creation. This is the . . . *Art* of God. 2. By . . . inspiring our minds with fine ideas. This is the *Language* of God. Nature, or the world around us, is the expression of God's Thought. We can see this, because it corresponds with *our* Thought : the order and arrangement of Nature fits in with our intelligence. We can see that there is a mind behind it ; just as, if you look at a telegraph needle moving, you can see that there is somebody's mind—Whose ? . . . the operator's, at the other end—and a mind like yours.

I.—THOUGHT AND MATTER

— is going to ask a question. [*An assistant says :—* " *God is Spirit. Thought is a kind of spirit, I suppose ?* " Yes. "*Matter is all the stuff we see and feel—solid, or fluid, or gaseous like air—earth and stones, trees and plants, water and smoke, flesh and blood, and living animals ?* Yes. "*Then how can Thought or Spirit make matter, or influence matter, or change it ? Is there any connection ? They are so different !*"]

Yes, they *are* different. And how Spirit can influence Matter is one of the great mysteries which no one can understand. But Spirit does influence Matter, Thought does influence Mind. I hold up my arms [*gesture*]. There! my thought has moved Matter, for my arms are Matter. My thought has sent a message along my nerves (which are like telegraph wires, only far more wonderful), my nerves have contracted my muscles, my muscles have lifted my arms. If I had no Thought, if I were dead, I could not lift an arm, and if you lifted it—what then? I was once climbing with a friend, and he fell and hit his head. He was not dead, but he was stunned, he was insensible, he had no Thought. I lifted his arm: it fell back lifeless. Then I saw that he was breathing. There was still *subconscious* thought, and I was very glad. His subconscious thought was still working his lungs, drawing in the air, and turning the oxygen into his blood. He was alive.

II.—THOUGHT CHANGES MATTER

So conscious thought can change matter; and unconscious thought can also change matter. The cow changes a bundle of hay into a glass of milk—billions of molecules of hay into billions of molecules of milk. That is her unconscious thought.

Scientific men used to overlook and forget this most important fact of thought in the management of matter. [The psychic factor in evolution was missed by the 19th century biologists.] Let me give you one example, because it is a very striking one.

It is this: animals which change their colour to that of the ground on which they are put. I remember once playing with a chameleon on board ship, and watching his queer lizard-body change its colour. But some caterpillars are even more extraordinary in the way their unconscious thought can alter the colouring-matter in their skins. Prof. Poulton took a certain kind of green caterpillar and put black twigs among the leaves they fed on. Most of the caterpillars became black, so as to look like twigs. Then he put white spills of paper among another lot of the caterpillars; and most of these turned white. There's mind changing matter for you!

More. He put chrysalises of this caterpillar on gilt paper, and the pupæ turned to a lustrous gold.

Now, if a little green caterpillar's unconscious thought can do that, is it difficult to understand that the infinite conscious thought of God can change Matter? Even the colour which the chrysalis changes is *matter*. It must be the thought of God that creates matter, and changes it; and creates life, and changes that.

The thought of the poet, artist, scientist, inventor, creates writings, pictures, statues, buildings, engines of all sorts. The Thought of God creates matter, creates the world, is always streaming through matter [*gesture*], it is the inner directive principle [cf. *Bergson*] which is always changing matter with inconceivable intelligence.

III.—GOD'S CREATIVE THOUGHT

But the human inventor or artist can only put together matter, and shape it, and use it. He uses things that God has made, wood and iron, for instance—uses them like bricks. He can't make them alive. The motor-car is a wonderful invention. Man is proud of making it. But God can make things alive; he can *make them make themselves*. Supposing you took a heap of iron, and then it grew up into a motor-car before your eyes, like a huge mushroom! You would say, "I am dreaming!" But that is what God does. (1) He gives things the power of *growing*. That is the first thing.

2. The next thing is this. Suppose the clutch of your motor cracked. And someone said, "Never mind. Just put the clutch in splints, and it will join up again." That would be a dream, too! But it is what happens when you break your leg: your leg mends itself. Or supposing your car got rather worn out; and you could just give it good food, and a rest, and then it got strong again! That is what happens to a horse. Or suppose one of the levers got broken off; and your car was able to grow a new one! That is what happens to plants and trees. So then the second power that distinguishes God's creation from man's creation is the power of *reparation*, of mending itself.

3. The third thing is this. Suppose your car got quite worn out, and wouldn't go any more. And some-

one said, "Never mind. This car has had several little baby cars. They are growing up nicely into beautiful Rolls-Royces. Which one would you like?" What a dream! Yet this is what happens every time your cat has kittens. So the third power which distinguishes God's creation from ours is the power of giving birth, the power of *reproduction*.

IV.—NOT PERFECT AND NOT FINISHED

Perhaps that is enough to give some idea of how God's thought works through matter, expresses itself in matter. God's thought is transcendent, holding all things in his mind. It is also immanent, the thought and life *in* everything—immanent even in the little green caterpillars.

The mystery is that Creation, which is so marvellous, is not perfect. That is difficult to understand. We have talked about it before (*L. 46*). We will talk about it again later. But just think of God's thought as like a stream, rushing through matter, meeting all kinds of obstacles, overcoming all kinds of difficulties, gradually getting things into shape. The result is far more marvellous than anything we can do—or imagine. But it is imperfect. It is unfinished—that is why. Perhaps it will never be finished in this world; but it will grow more perfect. God's thought is like a great artist working in his studio; finishing one beautiful picture after another, but always working at more—with plenty of pictures or statues not yet done, and lots more to be worked out.

V.—THE WORD OF GOD

Our last point is very short, because it is just a statement, a "dogma," which we will discuss some other day. Christian theology calls this Thought of God his *Word*. The whole thought of all the Universe is the Word of God. And this thought works itself out, or expresses itself, through the Spirit of God.

Also, we call this Word the Son of God. "Glory be to the Father, and to the Son, and to the Holy Ghost." You would be equally correct if you said, "Glory be to the Father, and to the Word, and to the Holy Ghost," or "Glory be to the Creator, and to his Thought, and to his Holy Spirit."

WHAT IS CHRISTIANITY?

T. has with him some book, which his hearers know.

I.—THE WORD AND THE BOOK

WE have been trying to think for the last twelve Lessons about God; we have tried to think about high, ineffable facts in a simple way; we have tried to look up at the tremendous Being who fills all things and rules all things. To-day we have a subject far simpler. A man. Jesus, the son of Mary.

Of course you would not think this subject simple if you saw all the thousands of books and arguments about it. And of course nothing is really simple. A stone is not really simple. Nor is the simplest flower, as Tennyson said in those famous lines about the rock-plant:—

“ Flower in the crannied wall,
I pluck you out of the crannies,
I hold you here, root and all, in my hand,
Little flower—but *if* I could understand
What you are, root and all, and all in all
I should know what God and man is.”

That tremendous epigram [*don't explain!*] sums up all our previous Lessons about God. If we could understand one thing, right down to the bottom, we should understand about God. Now God *wants* us to understand, just as you want a child to understand a book. The poor little beggar holds it upside down, and tears it, and you tell him little bits; and he says “Oh!” But he can't *read*. Then he learns one or two letters. He spots an initial:—“Ah, there's ‘A’! A for Agnes! But where on earth is ‘B’?” You show him a capital “B” for Billy! Gradually he learns to read.

God wanted the child-world to understand. Gradu-

ally, and very slowly, the world learnt to read ; it became civilised enough to understand something about goodness. I don't mean to read "literally." I mean to understand the Book that God was wanting to give it. The Thought of God [L. 48], the Son of God, who was waiting to come into the world till the world was ready. S. John calls him—not the Thought—but . . . "the Word was made flesh." You see, it's just the same idea. So think of that divine spirit, whom we call the Son of God, waiting to come into the world, like God's Book, for men to read. An ordinary book is a message which a man wants to give to the world. Here is one by Mr. —. You can't see his message : it is invisible thought. But he writes it out, and then you can see it. It has been *materialised*, that is, given a form of matter, an outward and visible form. When you think of a word at a charade for someone to guess, that word is invisible. The others come back to the room, but they can't see the word : so you *act* it—you materialise it a bit. Then perhaps they guess. But if you wrote it down they would know it at once. The word would have become like a book [cf. L. 55, Pt. 4].

II.—INCARNATION

So God waited with his Word till the world was sensible enough to understand. Then, in the fullness of time—that is, when the world was ready—"when the fullness of the time came," S. Paul says, "God sent forth his Son, born of a woman" [Gal. 4⁴]. The Word was made into a Book because there were enough people to read it. Only, really that Book was a living Man : "the Word was made . . . flesh," yes, or "became flesh, and dwelt among us, and we beheld his glory." What sort of glory ? It goes on—"glory as of the only begotten from the Father, full of grace and truth." [Jn. 1¹⁴.] Jesus was the living Book, in which everybody could read what God was like—full of grace, of all lovely goodness, and of truth. We call that the "incarnation," which is quite simple ["*in*" and "*caro, carnis*"] : it means "getting into a body," or "becoming flesh." Whenever a baby is born, a little baby soul becomes flesh. So every birth is an incarnation. But

the birth of Jesus on Christmas Day was a special birth ; it was the very Word, or thought, of God becoming flesh. So we call it *the* Incarnation.

That is not really difficult. Of course, every birth of every little baby is an incomprehensible wonder—an astounding miracle, if you like (only *I* don't like the word " miracle " : it's not a N.T. word ; and, when you come to think of it, every single thing is an astounding wonder, which is all that miracle means). Every little baby is a miracle or wonder. Every little baby is a word of God made flesh, a thought of God become man—and such beautiful thoughts they are ! Every little baby is a spirit from God incarnated. The birth of Jesus is only the difference between *a* and *the*. He is *the* thought of God incarnate. We look at him ; and we can know (so far as we are able to understand) " what God and man is." (Not " what God and man *are* "—Tennyson knew all about grammar—but " what God is, and what man is.")

III.—CHRIST IN HISTORY

When I was a boy I used to puzzle over a thought which, perhaps, puzzles you sometimes. " Why did God wait so long ? Why did Christ come so late in the world's history ? " It does seem strange. Man had been going on, they tell us, much as he is now, for at least 50,000 years [*Neanderthal man : Palæolithic man goes back more than twice as far. Recent authorities put palæolithic man at least 150,000 years, and eolithic man at probably 300,000 years*]. There was so much savagery for so many thousand years, so much cruelty, and stupidity, and unhappiness ! Why could not have God sent his Son sooner ? Why did he see this blindness going on for 50,000 years, or perhaps 300,000 years ?

But, I wonder ! When you come to think of it, you might put the opposite question, and ask, " Why did not God put it off some thousands of years more ? " It almost looks as if God had hurried it up too much ! Because when the Word of God did come into Jesus of Nazareth—well, what happened ? Were they ready for him ? No ! they didn't understand him. They took him and nailed him to a cross. So hadn't we

better leave it to God's judgment ? For it does look as if God chose the earliest possible moment. He gave them that living Book as soon as there were enough people to read it—to understand him—to make a start.

And do we understand it to-day ? I am sure we don't. Is the world ready for Jesus Christ to-day ? I am sure it isn't. Just a handful of disciples began to understand. They were able to make a start. But the Church has never properly understood—only in parts. It has only read parts of that Book which is Jesus. Lots of his teaching has been put aside, and forgotten. It still is. Even in church we still only understand in part. For instance, Jesus said that we are brothers : but we don't understand that yet. We don't behave as brothers. Only a few saints have done that. [Also he said we were not to give people the title of " Father,"—doubtless because to do so is a denial of *brotherhood*. This we simply disobey.]

So I think God has done his best for us. And *his* best is *the* best.

IV.—THE REVEALING OF GOD

Now this is Christianity. The belief that God has revealed himself—has shown what his lovely character is like—he has revealed himself in Jesus. The thought of God, the *word* of God, or, as we say, the Son of God, has come into the world as a human being. In that splendid human being, Jesus of Nazareth, men can read the thought of God, and love it, as we can read another man's thoughts in a book.

Most educated people believe in one God. Even in India, where the uneducated worship so many cruel so-called gods, and idols, even there you will find that the educated people (unless they are irreligious) believe in one God. It is principally due to the spread of Christian people all over the world that they believe this. And it is a great and splendid thing that they do. The whole world to-day, excepting irreligious people, and excepting the great masses of ignorant heathen people, does agree with us ; and we do all worship the one true God after our fashion. And the ignorant millions in Asia will follow the educated classes in time.

We Christians believe in Christ. I don't think this

separates us from those non-Christians, e.g. in India, who do believe in God. The more you find out about them, the more you learn how much already they owe to Christ; *and they know it*, when they are educated enough to know anything. In China, too, and Japan they are learning every day. And the millions of Muslims in the world acknowledge Jesus (they pronounce his name *Isa*), though they put a very inferior man, Muhammad, first: this is because they have not yet learned even that a man who committed murder and adultery, as Muhammad did, *is* inferior! in spite of his big qualities.

More and more the non-Christian people in the world are learning about Christ; and when they read his life they say, "What a splendid man!" They do see that you couldn't hope to be better than by following Christ. And people even in England who hate the Church, and sometimes say they hate Christianity—if you ask them, "But Christ?" they will nearly always say, "O, Christ's teaching is splendid; but Christians are not like Christ!" Which is quite true. We aren't; and we are always misrepresenting Christ to the world, especially by our quarrelling, and by our poor, thin, narrow, intolerant ideals, which aren't a bit like the ideas of Christ.

V.—THE BRIDGE

In the Creed we have suddenly come from God to man, from "the Father Almighty" to "Jesus." Just remember that. Christianity is the *bridge* between God and man. And all the world is beginning to use that bridge.

“AND IN JESUS”

I.—THE NAME

“JESUS” is the human name of our Lord. So to-day we will think of his humanity, that is, we will think of him as a real man. No one knows the exact derivation of the name “Jesus” or “Joshua”; but it was a common Jewish name, and Jewish people understood it to mean “saviour.” Later, the Greek Christians sometimes connected it with a Greek verb [*ἰάομαι*], meaning “to heal,” but of course the name was not really derived from this. We read in the first gospel [*Mt.* 1²¹] that, before our Lord was born, S. Joseph saw a messenger of God in a dream, and this spirit (or “angel” as we call them) said to him in his dream—“Thou shalt call his name Jesus; for it is he that shall save his people from their sins.” Thus both Jews and Greeks associated the name with salvation and healing; and it is important to remember (as we said in *L.* 29) that salvation and healing are really the same idea. Jesus said, “Thy faith hath saved thee” to the sinner woman [*Lk.* 7⁵⁰], and he used exactly the same words to the woman who was ill [*Mk.* 5³⁴]. So the name Jesus does mean “healer” as well as “saviour”; and, as we said before, both these words mean the same thing, in English as well as Greek. A saviour is one who helps us out of evil, both in body and soul, and helps us to be whole or healthy. He saves people’s bodies by healing them; he heals people’s souls by saving them.

This is important, because most people don’t attach much meaning to the word “saviour.” Or, if they do, they think it means “one who saves people from Hell.” But what S. Joseph heard in his dream was . . . “saves people from their . . . sins.” So the simplest way to

think of it is that this little baby was given a beautiful old name which meant "saviour" or "healer"; and this name turned out to be just the right name for one who went about helping and healing people.

II.—MUDDLE-HEADEDNESS

But the most important thing of all to remember is that "Jesus" is the name of a real man. It is not only the Holy Name: it is also the Human Name. Indeed, it is holy because it is human.

An enormous number of people get muddled up over quite simple things. You recollect how we said they get muddled over the doctrine of the Trinity. What many people seem really to think is something like this: "There are only three Gods, and there is only one God, but practically there are three Gods. The third God comes to the front at Confirmations, and we sing hymns about him on Whit-Sunday, and have a Bank Holiday after. The rest of the year we think about the second God. And the first God has no proper festival at all: he just stays behind the other two." Well! we said that such ideas are frightfully wrong; and that *the* great thing to understand is that there is only One God. I said, "Stick to that. And if it puzzles you to go any further, just say—There is one God; but we know two active . . . Manifestations of him, that we call the Son and the Holy Ghost." That is very near, as near as you can get to the truth, perhaps, in everyday English.

In the same way people get muddled about the divinity of our Lord. People generally get muddled because they can't keep their thoughts distinct. Their minds are like a paint-box that has dropped into the water. If you say to them—"One of these loaves weighs 2 lb. and the other 4 lb., total weight, 6 lb." they say—"O yes: The two loaves weigh 6 lb., therefore each loaf weighs 3 lb." Their minds are always *compromising*. If I say [*holding up an open book*]"Part of this page is white, and part is black," they say—"O, yes: the page is grey." Well, it *does* look grey from where you are sitting, but it's really black and white. Now, supposing we think of our Lord again, in

the way we did last time, as like this—as the living . . . Book of God ; then we may think of his human nature as being like the pure white pages of the book. What then will be his divine nature ? . . . Yes, like the wonderful black sentences, or words, on the white pages. Is that *grey* ? . . . No, it is black and white.

If you take $\frac{1}{2}$ oz. of white lead and $\frac{1}{2}$ oz. of lamp black, and mix them up, you get a very dull grey. And if you take $\frac{1}{2}$ oz. of yellow ochre and $\frac{1}{2}$ oz. of Prussian blue, and mix them up, you generally get a very nasty green—like nothing on earth. And when people take what they suppose to be the divinity of Christ, and what they suppose to be his humanity, and mix *them* up, they also get a result like nothing on earth—or in heaven : something very dull. Something like that stained glass window [*If we are in church, there is almost sure to be one !*]

III.—A REAL MAN

That is what people do : they mix up the natures of our Lord. And they produce an imaginary being who is perfectly unreal. Those dreadful, weak, flabby, sentimental pictures you see everywhere ! Thank God, Christ is as unlike those pictures as anything can be. They think such pictures are pious ; but they are really almost blasphemous—or perhaps they are just feebly idolatrous. They give people an utterly wrong idea of Jesus, who was a splendid, manly, glorious human being. If he were to come to —, and you met him in the street, you would come back and say—“ O, I say, I’ve just been talking to the most awfully jolly chap. He says he’s only a carpenter, and he looks like that : only you should just talk to him. He’s the most splendid carpenter I ever saw. Well, you just come and see. We’ll find out where he’s gone.” Now, *that* is the way he would strike you. That is the way he struck the fishermen and the people who said, “ Come and see,” and followed him. He didn’t wear a halo. He didn’t look like a clergyman in robes or a Roman-collar. He looked like a fine, keen, strong, humorous, clever working man—and “ the first true gentleman that ever breathed ” [*Dekker*]. And there was something about those shrewd, kind eyes ! He understood all about you,

and yet he was so jolly that he liked you ! [*I doubt if we can get the right impression unless we use their own words.*]

No wonder even the greatest artists haven't been able to paint pictures that are really like him. But you can imagine a little, sometimes.

IV.—THE GOSPEL PICTURES

Even in writing, people couldn't really describe him. Many people tried. And four of these little books have come down to us, the four . . . Gospels. The second Gospel is by S. Mark, the third by S. Luke, the fourth gives the highest idea of all, but we are not sure if the John who wrote it was the same John as the Apostle. The first Gospel is not by S. Matthew : they gave it that name long after it was written ; though perhaps some part of it had originally come from S. Matthew, which may have been the reason. S. Mark is the earliest picture, and therefore is from a point of view nearest to Christ : indeed it is certain that S. Mark got his notes from S. Peter ; so it is a very close picture indeed.

But in these pictures you get many other pictures—impressions of different people. You can see the bad people hating him, because he was always quite bold and spoke straight out, and told the plain truth, whether people liked it or not ; and you can see the nice people liking him ; and you can see an official like Pilate being very much surprised at him and very much interested.

You can see how Jesus was always saying unexpected things, how he never copied anyone else ; and how the people round him were sometimes rather alarmed, because they never knew what would happen. He was so unlike other people, and yet in a way so like, and so simple with it all, and so very gentle. The nice people thought, " That's just the sort of man I should wish to be like. I wonder if it's any use my trying." The nasty people thought, " This man is a dangerous revolutionary, upsetting everything." And the proud people thought, " Horror ! He is trying to make everybody equal."

He was always surrounded by people ; and you can stand in the crowd [*Bishop N. Talbot*]. You can stand with the fishermen by the lake ; with the grey-bearded priests and Pharisees ; with the people who wanted to

be healed ; with the crowds who shouted on Palm Sunday. You can stand with the dear old Disciples, who adored him, and followed him about, and yet who never *could* understand him—till after he had died and appeared to them again from the next world. You can stand in the crowd, and see what he seemed like to different people. And you can read their notes of some of the things he said—some of these sayings that they didn't understand, and some that we are only beginning to understand now.

People got very different impressions. The Pharisees thought him a heretic ; the Rulers, a rebel ; the common people, a deliverer ; the poor saw a friend ; the sick, a healer ; the thoughtful, a teacher ; the Disciples, a master. But they all agreed about one thing. He was a man. He was not half man and half God. He was a real man.

THE MAN CHRIST JESUS

I.—DOCETISM

[*We will explain later. Just get the word down.*]

JESUS our Lord was a real man, and is a real man. I want to be sure you understand this ; because so many people who go to church fancy that he was—as we said last time—a sort of . . . mixture, half man and half God. And if you say, “ But please remember he looked just like an ordinary man,” then they say, “ O yes, I daresay he *looked* like a man, but he was really God inside.” They think that he just sailed triumphantly through the world, pretending to be a man ; and that when he was tired, or depressed and sad, that was just his niceness—sharing some of our pain to show his sympathy ; but that he could have flown out of it at any moment if he had liked, because all the time he was really God and not man. They think that when he healed people, he was God ; but that when he slept or was hungry, he was just condescending, like a king putting on an old suit of clothes and joining in the crowd.

People who fancy things like that often think they are particularly orthodox, and correct, and religious. But our Lord healed people and did other great works as a *man* ; and he said that his disciples would do the same works—“ and greater works than these shall he do ” [Jn. 14¹²]. S. Paul based his very hope of eternal life on the manhood of Jesus :—“ Since by man came death,” he said, “ by man came also the resurrection from the dead ” [1 Co. 15²¹].

The idea that Jesus only *seemed* to be a man, or pretended to be a man, is a heresy. It is a very bad one, because it makes all Christianity seem unreal. This

idea is often put into sermons ; and then people say, " O, all this Christianity is so far-fetched and artificial. I can't believe all that stuff ! " You will often hear people say things like that. When they do, you just say to them, " My dear chap, that isn't proper Christianity at all. It's just heresy ! "

II.—DOCETIC HERESIES

And what is heresy ? It isn't anything wicked : it's generally mere muddle-headedness—only muddle-headedness does an awful lot of harm. In old days it was difficult not to be a heretic, if you thought ; because most thinking was pioneer work over an uncharted sea. And the poor old heretics were often very badly treated. People made experiments in thought. They had to ; and, of course, most of their experiments went wrong at first. You know in chemistry how a fellow gets a few test-tubes, and a retort, and some sulphur and saltpetre, and that sort of thing. And there is a sudden puff, and the most awful smell, and he goes about for some weeks without any eyebrows. That is an experiment. Heresies were experimental thinking. It is wrong to abuse the heretics or mock at them : the experiments in thought had to be made.

There was a famous heresy, which began in the very first century, and which was called Docetism.

I should love you to remember the names of all these famous old heresies : but you won't. So don't bother to write any more down.

Docetism said that Jesus only *appeared* to be a man [*δοκεῖν, if they do Greek*]. His body was not a real body, they said—only a kind of phantom body. He was God all the time, and only *seemed* to be man. So, you see, the good people to-day who think they are so orthodox are often just Docetists.

In the fifth Century another heresy flourished—Eutychianism, or Monophysitism—I knew you wouldn't remember all the names ! There was another form of it called Aphthartodocetism ! These people said that Christ had only one nature, and that nature was divine : his human nature, they said, had been absorbed or soaked up by the divine, so that he wasn't human at all. That was condemned as a heresy by the Council of Chalcedon

in 451. But I expect you have had enough about heresies. If you ever go to Egypt you will find there a very ancient and interesting church, the Coptic Church. They are still monophysite to-day, and so are cut off from the rest of the Eastern Church. The old heretics were mostly people who wanted so much to be orthodox that they slipped over on the other side. So are many good English people. They are so anxious to do honour to Christ that they have made him unreal. Dear muddlers ! We mustn't tell them they are Docetists, or Eutychians, or Monophysites, or Apollinarians (that was another sort), or even "Aphthartodocetist Gaianitæ" (another sort). They would be so shocked.

You will never get hold of the Christian religion properly, unless you have this simple idea of Christ being a man. The reason why some people have such a stuffy idea of their religion is because they are Monophysites, or Docetists, or something of that sort, instead of being just plain Catholic Christians. And often the reason why other sorts of people say they don't like "dogma" or "church" is because they think dogma means holding some of these complicated heresies [cf. *L.* 55, *Pt.* 3].

III.—JESUS LAUGHED AND CRIED

Jesus was a nice, strong, healthy man, who dressed like everybody else. He got hungry and tired like other people ; he read books and learnt things as he grew older, like other people ; he was uncertain about the future, like other people. He let Judas become an Apostle, and he couldn't have known at first how bad Judas was going to turn out. He saw that disaster was coming upon him ; but he hoped against hope, and prayed that the full cup of his suffering might be removed from him [*Mk.* 14³⁶]. He foresaw also that some great catastrophe was coming to his country, and that the old order of things was going to pass away ; but he said that only the heavenly Father knew about it, and that he didn't know and the angels didn't know [*Mk.* 13³²].

We are told that he cried. When ? . . . [*Jn.* 11³⁵]. But we may be sure also that he laughed. And he joked

too, and made other people laugh. If I were to call this Point "The Jokes of Jesus," it would sound to us irreverent; but that only just shows what an unreal idea we have of our Lord. Surely he would have been less than a man, if he had never joked—not a real man. But we have taken away the smile from the face of Jesus [*T. R. Glover*]. The Evangelists hadn't much room for jokes: books had to be short in those days when they were written by hand on parchment or papyrus; and they had other things to put in and as S. John says there was only room for a few of Christ's sayings [*Jn. 21²⁵*]. But there are some jokes in the Gospels, all the same, and quite a number of sayings which show that Jesus had a humorous way of putting things. Sometimes we can see this, if we put them into everyday English. For instance: "If you have a lighted candle, what do you do with it? You don't put it under a pint-pot! You put it on a candlestick, and then it gives light!" I think he smiled when he said that: I am sure the crowd grinned appreciatively. Or think how he made fun of the hypocrites: "When they have dinner, they strain their drink through a cloth, because they are so afraid an insect might get in and defile it. They strain out a gnat. And then all the time, without noticing it, they swallow—a camel!" You can see the funny picture—first the great awkward head going down, then the long hairy neck—gulp, gulp. Then—the hump! Then the huge rough body; then the long wavering legs, and the big clumsy feet! "They strain out a gnat; but they swallow—a camel!" The people must have shouted with laughter.

IV.—OTHER HERESIES

People have an idea that the Church says that Jesus lived in Heaven with God, and then came down to earth for a few years, and looked like a stained-glass window; or that if he looked like a man, he was only acting the part. Now this idea that Jesus lived in Heaven before he was born [*the pre-existence of the human Jesus*] is another heresy, just as Docetism is a heresy. Others think that Jesus was really two persons, a divine person and a human person: the human person was born and

suffered, the divine person did mighty works. This is another heresy (Nestorianism) : there was once a great and splendid Nestorian Church, which spread over to China and India ; but there is only a tiny, persecuted remnant left now, between Persia and Turkey. Other people think that God altogether was in Jesus [*The Holy Trinity incarnate*] ; and then people say—" When Jesus was dying on the Cross, who was looking after the world ? " That is another heresy ! [*Patripassianism*].

So there you are ! To avoid all these mistaken experiments in thinking, just say, quite simply—" There is one God ; there are not three Gods. Jesus was and is a real man ; he is not half man and half God."

Now I have arranged for ——to ask me a question [*An assistant, or a visitor, or the head of the class, reads out this question twice over*] : " Would you kindly explain, if this is so, how it is that we say that Jesus Christ is perfect God as well as perfect Man ? If we say so strongly that he is human, how can he be divine ? "

Well, we will try and answer that question next time.

HUMANITY AND DIVINITY

I.—NOT OPPOSITES

WE said last time that our Lord Jesus was a real man, and still is. You can't put that too simply or too strongly. When people fancy that he was half man and half God, they make Christianity into a kind of fairy-tale.

But at the end, we put the Question:—"Has not the Church always said that Jesus is divine as well as human? If you say so strongly that he was a real man, how can you also say that he was very God?" "Surely" people say, "the more he is man, the less he is God. He can't be both." Well, that last sentence is another heresy!

The mistake most people make is this. They assume—take for granted—that being man and being God are *opposite* things. Being man is called humanity, and being God is called . . . Divinity. People assume that these are opposites. So they think: The more really Jesus is man, the less really is he God.

"But aren't they opposites?" you say. No! they are not. It is much more true to say, "The more really Jesus is man, the *more* really is he God." Let me explain.

In the Witwatersrand gold-fields in S. Africa there are estimated to be 2,500 million pounds worth of gold. Of course, that gold is not pure, but is mixed with quartz and other things. But imagine it all mined out and melted, a huge pile of ingots of pure, shiny, yellow gold worth 2,500 millions. Then think of a little tiny piece of gold leaf, all crinkly and flimsy, and so light that you have to keep it in paper to prevent it being blown away. That bit of leaf is very different from the huge mass of parent gold: almost infinitely different; *but it*

is not the opposite. On the contrary, it is the same thing. In the like manner, God is infinitely greater than we are, but he is not the opposite. On the contrary, we are like him: we are made in his image. He is infinitely, inconceivably, greater, better, wiser, lovelier, than we are; but we are his children. He is our Father. He is not our opposite. It is not true that the more we become like God, the less human we are. On the contrary, the more people become like God, the *more* human they become.

II.—ALLOY

Now, John, you are fond of cricket [*This is pre-arranged*]. Who is your favourite cricketer? . . . Now, if I were to say, "Are you like him?" it would seem rather cheek. You are so different. But, of course, you *are* like him. You both have noses, for instance! and arms and legs. But more, you are both cricketers. Now the better cricketer you become, the more you become like him, but you don't become less yourself, or less fit to play in our eleven! You become *more* yourself, not less. What makes you different from Mr. — is your *want* of good cricket, your wifes, and your muffs, and your habit of spooning the ball to coverpoint [*or whatever it is*].

Mark that. It is our *faults* that make us less like God. Falstaff is a delightfully amusing character; but unfortunately he is a coward, a liar, and a drunkard. That certainly makes him less like God, *but it also makes him less of a man*. No men are altogether like God, because they all have different faults which make them in various ways unlike God; but these faults also spoil them more or less as men. A pickpocket is not at all divine, but what a poor sort of a man he is!

Think of the bit of gold leaf again. No goldleaf is pure: the metal in it is always an alloy. Red leaf has 24 gr. of copper to 460 of gold: citron-leaf has 440 gr. of gold, 10 of copper, and 30 of silver. What is called white gold leaf is only half gold: 240 of gold and 240 of silver. If you melt up your white leaf again and separate off the silver, and roll and beat it out again, you have pure gold leaf—*more* gold than it was before, more its

real self; and at the same time exactly like the great ingots of pure yellow gold.

Of course you see the point. Our human nature is the pure gold. Our faults are the . . . alloy. If we had no faults (if we were sinless) we should be perfectly human, and at the same time we should be divine, and like God.

III.—A PERFECT MAN

Now there once lived a man—only once—who had no faults. There was nothing to spoil him. He was everything a man could possibly be. And his disciples were so surprised at finding someone who was sinless, always a real man quite untouched with faults and imperfections that they said, "This must be the Son of God." The more they thought about it afterwards, the more sure they were that this man, because he was so good, must be God. *They* didn't think of God as an opposite. They were Jews, and were passionately keen on there being only one God: yet they were so convinced about Christ that they did not shrink from calling him God.

There is an old Latin saying, "To err is human," but it isn't really true. It's like saying, "To miss is cricket!" [cf. *L.* 56, *Pt.* 3.] Pope extended it into a neat epigram—"To err is human, to forgive, divine"; but that isn't really true either. To forgive is human. Of course it is! So much so that Christ said we couldn't be forgiven ourselves unless we . . . Does that mean that to forgive is not divine. Of course not. To forgive is peculiarly divine. "Forgive us our trespasses, as we . . ." And also, therefore, peculiarly human. Christ just put the whole idea in his insistence on forgiveness. Have you seen the *Merchant of Venice*? . . . You remember Portia's great speech [4¹]:—

"The quality of mercy is not strained,
It droppeth, as the gentle rain from heaven . . .
It is an attribute to God himself;
And earthly power doth then show likest God's
When mercy seasons justice. Therefore, Jew,
Though justice be thy plea, consider this—
That in the course of justice, none of us
Should see salvation; we do pray for mercy;
And that same prayer doth teach us all to render
The deeds of mercy."

IV.—PATCHES OF SUNLIGHT

The jolly things you see in men are like patches of sunlight in them. You know what sunshine is—heat and light waves. These waves are quite cold and dark between our atmosphere and the sun ; but they are started by the sun at one end, and when they reach our atmosphere, at a terrific rate, they make light and heat again. And none of that sunshine is lost. When you burn coal you are burning bottled sunshine—rays that made plants grow, millions of years ago, and those plants died and slowly turned into coal ; and now you get all the heat back again. Flowers and insects, and all live things have sunshine in them. It all comes from the one central body ; and it is indestructible. You can change it ; you can turn it into energy ; you can make it drive an engine ; but you can't destroy it. That is a picture of what happens in the soul of man : all the good and jolly things in a man have come from God, who is the one great centre of light ; they are like patches of sunshine in him. The wisdom, love, courage, cleverness, beauty in men's characters are bits of God in them. Think of the finest man you know. God is all that, and much more. A good man may be compared to a burning-glass, which is so beautifully shaped, and so pure—that is, so transparent to the sun's rays—that it can *focus* them in a very hot and bright spot, and thus set things on fire and melt them. Such a man has a lot of God in him—that's all ; he is " filled with the Spirit of God," but not really altogether filled. If he were, there would be no room in him for anything but God. He would be God, in a human soul and body.

Yes : but Jesus *was* full of all that divine perfection ; there was nothing wrong or imperfect in him. So his spirit was one with God ; his nature was divine. The proper way to say this is that he had two natures, human nature and divine nature. He was only perfect man because he was also perfect God ; but his Godhead, his divinity, was, of course, limited by his being a man. He had not, in his human nature, the transcendent power of God ; he could not do everything that God does or know everything that God knows. He was a real human being all the time.

As an illustration of this doctrine (the Catholic doctrine that there are two natures in Christ) let us think of a fountain. The fountain is like the human nature of Christ ; the water is like his divine nature. The water is kept on a higher level in a great reservoir ; we can think of that as like God. The water is always pouring into the fountain : it is the life of the fountain. The fountain is perfectly pure—it has no faults and no mud or stain to darken the water. But it does limit the flow of water ; it has a carefully constructed series of spouts which do this. If it had not, it would not be a fountain. If it were just a big round hole, the water would just well out of it and you would not see anything. But the spouts which limit the flow of water make the lovely spray leap high in the air *so that everyone can see it*. Thus the human nature limits the divine, but also makes it visible. Of course, this only illustrates one side (it doesn't illustrate the likeness of the human and divine so well) ; but it may help us to understand.

THE DIVINITY OF CHRIST

This lesson would be omitted for younger classes, and a Revision substituted.

I.—THE FACT OF CHRIST'S HUMANITY

WE began by saying that our Lord Jesus Christ was a real man, and not an unreal mixture of two halves ; because a being, half man and half god, would be neither one nor the other—he would be a fanciful creature—a sort of myth or fairy-tale character, neither human nor divine. Many Christians do think of him like this ; and the result is that many other more sensible people say that they can't believe in Christianity at all. They are quite right : if Christianity were like the stained-glass windows, no sensible people nowadays could believe in it.

But Christianity is a religion of *facts*, not of *fancies*. Jesus the real man is a fact ; and if we get quite clear in our minds about that fact, we shall be able to have a real strong religion. We must be able to say with S. Peter—" Hear these words : Jesus of Nazareth, a man approved of God unto you by powers and wonders and signs, which God did by him " [Ac. 2²²]. He was a man, but a man of powers and wonders—a wonderful man, through whom God worked.

(a) This does not mean that the divine spirit in him made him, in his human nature, omnipotent (able to do everything that can be done) : he wanted to do many things which he was unable to do.

(b) Nor does it mean that he was omnipresent like God (present everywhere) : of course he was not.

(c) Nor does it mean that he was omniscient (knowing

everything). Some old theologians in the Middle Ages said that he knew everything, even when he was a tiny baby in his mother's arms ! What a dreadful little baby such a baby would be !—just pretending to be a baby [*Docetism, in fact*]. But S. Luke tells us on the contrary that “ Jesus advanced in wisdom and stature, and in favour with God and man ” [*Lk. 2⁵²*]. He did not know everything ; but, as he grew up, he became, as S. Luke also says, “ full of wisdom ” [“ *becoming full of wisdom.*” *R.V. Marg. Lk. 2⁴⁰*]. He was *always* right. At the present day so much knowledge has been accumulated in the world that, if a very clever man were to work hard all his life, he could not learn and master more than a thousandth—or more likely, a millionth—part of all there is to be known. But this doesn't mean that a man can't have a right judgment in all things. An entirely wise man *could*, but no one *has* a right judgment in *all* things ; this is because of our faults, we are too short-sighted, too one-sided to be always right. But the *better* people are, the more often they are right. Jesus was always right because he was perfectly good.

II.—THE FACT OF CHRIST'S DIVINITY

There was *nothing* wrong about Jesus. And we said last time that this human rightness—this perfect humanity—was not the opposite to . . . Divinity, but was of a *piece with* Divinity ; that even our imperfect, broken Humanity is like a piece of . . . gold leaf, a tiny scrap of . . . alloy. Christ only differed from us in not having any faults. He was “ in all things made like unto his brethren,” even “ in all points tempted like as we are, yet without sin ” [*Heb. 2¹⁸ ; 4¹⁵*]. The essence of Divinity is goodness : the real character of God is that he is perfect goodness and love. This is not the opposite to Humanity, but is the fullness of it, the perfection of it : our ordinary Humanity is but a patch of the Divine . . . sunshine. It is then possible to be true man and true God at the same time.

Now, I want you to notice that this also is not based upon fancy, but upon fact. That Jesus is a man is one fact—a great, solid splendid fact, upon which the Christian Church is built. But it is equally a solid fact

that the friends of Jesus saw that he was not like an ordinary man, because he was so much better, so strangely excellent. And it is a solid fact equally that, when we read the Gospels, we also say with them, "This man is unlike any other man." There have been, in all human history, only a very few men at once really great and wonderfully good. Most of the great saints had some of the faults of their times: all had quite grave defects and shortcomings; no one was more ready to acknowledge this than they were themselves. Even among the very highest men (and there are very few of them), Buddha, S. Paul, S. Francis of Assisi, S. Katherine of Siena, they are—as everyone can see—quite clearly imperfect characters, splendid and great though they be.

So we say, This man Christ Jesus is unlike any other man. Human as he is, yet he is different. No one can touch him. Even the Christian saints, who spent their whole lives following him, only make his perfection the brighter by contrast. God must be in him, in a special and wonderful way. He must be Divine [cf. *L.* 35, *Pts.* 3 and 4].

III.—THE TWO NATURES IN CHRIST

This is the second solid fact. The Church has expressed it by saying that in Jesus there are two natures, the Human and the Divine. Last time I tried to explain this by the illustration of the . . . Fountain.

We can understand this because there are two natures in our own selves: (1) A so-called "human" part (perhaps it is really the animal part of us), which makes us troublesome and quarrelsome. This divides people and leads to dispute and war. (2) A divine nature, which makes us friendly, understanding and helping one another. This makes men unite in cities and nations and trades, and is the cause of civilisation, and peace, and all co-operation, and all family life and friendship.

[It is perhaps best to stop here, with a recapitulation of the analogy of the Fountain. But some may care to say something about the analogy of the Undermind; only it should not be pressed too far.]

IV.—THE UNDERMIND

Here is another analogy. You each of you have got an undermind [*we will spare them* "subliminal intelligence"]; and we always think of it as being underneath, though there is really no above or beneath in our minds.

For instance. Suppose we have an examination, and I ask you the question, "What are the capitals of Rumania, Serbia, and Poland?" You say to yourself, "O, yes, I know!" But the worst of it is you can't *think* of their names! You learnt them once: they aren't really gone out of your mind. They *are* there, but you can't fish them up. Now where are they? They are not in your *conscious* mind, evidently. You wish they were! But they are near enough for you to hope to fish them up, if I only give you time to think a little. They are in fact in your subconscious mind—what I am calling your undermind. They are there, because you learnt them once; they are stored away in a cupboard.

That undermind of yours is like a vast storehouse. All sorts of things are there. It *does* all sorts of things. It keeps all the parts of your body going. When you learn to do anything—to play the piano, for instance, your undermind takes it over, so that your conscious mind can talk to someone, while this unconscious mind is playing a tune. And when you have a bright idea, that idea leaps out of your undermind. Sometimes, when a man writes a great poem, or anything great, it just bubbles up from his undermind. As we say, in a very clumsy way, "It comes into his head."

It is only in recent years that this wonderful thing about us has been known; and even now we only know a little about it. But we know that this undermind is far, far larger than the little top point where we are conscious. And it helps us to understand more easily that it is possible for Christ to have two natures, one blended into the other. More easy, because *we* have two minds—an overmind and an undermind; and the undermind is far the more important, though we are not conscious of it. Our conscious mind is like the flame: our undermind is like the lamp under the flame—or,

rather, it is like a whole gasworks—pipes, retorts, gasometers and all—it's so vast and complicated.

You see, we are finding out many things about man's mind [*psychology*], we are making great discoveries in this as in other things. And as we find out more, we are able to understand a little more about what used to seem unintelligible mysteries. We might then think of Christ's Divinity as like his undermind, held under by his conscious human overmind, but always straining up through that human consciousness. The truth cannot be as simple as that. His undermind must have been human as well as his overmind. But it gives us an analogy—a sort of picture, which some may find helpful. The simple truth is : Christ was a real man, and yet more than a man—he was divine.

We find in our actual practical experience that in getting to know Christ we get to know God.

We saw in the previous Lessons that Christ was (and is) a real man. It is equally true, and we hold the two truths together, that he is really God.

[As we have suggested, the higher problems of Christology are too difficult for young people. The teacher is advised to omit this Lesson, unless he feels perfectly sure of his ground and capable of holding his class.]

CHRIST

[Much of the usual teaching has been omitted from this Lesson, because the title "Christ" is often explained in ways that are rather inaccurate and misleading. The Greeks had no rite of anointing; and therefore *χριστός* (a rare word in classical Greek) had no meaning to Greek ears except that in which it might be used by a physician. On the other hand, the Hebrew word for "anointed" (of which "Messiah" is a transliteration), originally used of the anointing of kings, had long had a symbolical meaning, and signified "consecrated" or raised to high honour—as it does in the Psalms. The Messianic idea itself would require a dozen Lessons, and then would only confuse the minds of the young—even supposing that scholars were fully agreed about it.

The custom of describing the work of Christ under the categories of Prophet, Priest, and King, is as old as Eusebius, and has been copied by one writer after another. To modern ears it is become archaic, and to the young it is not very real.

1. Prophets were not anointed—except that Elijah is said to have anointed his successor as well as the kings, Hazael and Jehu [1 K. 19¹⁶]: they arose at the direct consecration of God. Originally unction denoted only kingship; but after the Exile, when the high-priest had to act as king, he also was anointed, and to this period belongs the story of the anointing of Aaron in Ex. 29 and 30. The custom was not long continued.

2. Jesus is not described as a priest in the Gospels; but his priesthood is made a prominent argument in dealing with Jewish minds by the writer of the Epistle to the Hebrews, which ultimately found a place in the Canon: It is a mystical idea, which is readily debased in literal and unspiritual minds; and to the young would either be meaningless, or would suggest crude notions of

sacrifice or tritheistic ideas of the atonement. 3. *The word king, again, is one which needs to be used with the most extreme discretion, and is therefore in teaching better unused. Our Lord never called himself either priest or king, but he accepted the title of prophet, which was so freely given him [Lk. 4¹⁸, 13³³; Mt. 23²⁹. Scholars to-day would not ascribe the exceptional use of "King" in the Parable of the Judgment, Mt. 25, to Jesus himself as a description of himself]. That title is a noble one, though it does not describe all that our Lord and our God is to us.]*

I.—CONSECRATED

"JESUS" is the name of our Lord, the holy Name. "Christ" is his title. It is a Greek word, as "Jesus" is a Hebrew word. To those who spoke Greek it was a translation into Greek of the Hebrew word "Messiah," and meant the anointed one, that is, the *consecrated* one. The Jews were always expecting a great deliverer whom they called the Messiah, and those who were converted by Christ believed that he was the promised Messiah, as indeed he was. But Greek Christians who were not Jews did not see all the meaning in the word "Christos" or Christ: so they gave up the custom of saying "Jesus the Christ," which meant "Jesus the Messiah," and treated the title "Christ" almost as we should use a surname; and so they said, not "Jesus the Christ," but simply "Jesus Christ," as we do.

So, then, the name "Jesus" has the meaning of—do you remember? . . . *salvation*, that is, making us safe and sound, healthy and holy [L. 48]. And the title "Christ" has the meaning of . . . *consecrated*, or exalted to divine honour. "God highly exalted him, and gave unto him the name which is above every name; that in the name of Jesus every knee should bow" [Ph. 2⁹]. We may then think of "Jesus Christ" as meaning "Jesus the consecrated one," or "Jesus the exalted one."

II.—THE TRUE MESSIAH

The Gospels were written in Greek; but Jesus and his people spoke in Aramaic, which was a form of Hebrew. So when the word "Christ" occurs in the Gospels it is not the word they used, but is a translation

into Greek of the word they used, which was the Hebrew word . . . Messiah. It does not occur very often, but when it does occur as a description, it has this Hebrew meaning. It means not only "the consecrated one," but the special consecrated one whom the Jews expected to come as their Messiah, or great deliverer. The common people were full of this idea. They so hated being under foreign rule—who were their rulers? . . . And they thought some glorious king would arise, as their ancient prophets had said, who would put everything right, and rule in strength and justice. So, sometimes they said of Jesus, "He is a great prophet," and sometimes they said, "He is the Messiah," which in Greek would be "The Christ."

Our Lord knew that the world was not going to be put right in such a simple manner as that. The Temptation in the Wilderness is a description of how he put away all thoughts of becoming a magical prince, who should sweep away all his enemies and rule magnificently over the kingdoms of the world. He knew that he might have had a glorious time for a few years, but the world would not have been any better in the end. Many national leaders have become great conquerors; but after a while things went on again as before, or worse than before. Jesus knew that the only way to make the world any better is to change men's hearts and improve their characters. This did not lead him to a throne, but to a cross; and the only crown that men put on his head was one of thorns. But from that cross he has ruled the world ever since, in the only real way—by making people better.

So when the common people wanted to acclaim him as the Messiah he would not let them. He let S. Peter say: "Thou art the Christ, the Son of the living God," but at the same time he charged the disciples "that they should tell no man that he was the Christ" [*Mt.* 16¹⁶, 20].

III.—THE SAMARITAN WOMAN

Once Jesus was talking to a woman by a well. She was only a peasant woman and a Samaritan, but Jesus told her something that he hadn't told anyone else. He told her he was the promised Messiah [*Jn.* 4²⁶]. And

the reason seems to have been that she had got the right idea of what the Messiah was to be. She didn't think of him as a national deliverer or conquering prince ; but as one who would reveal God to people. So she said : " I know that Messiah cometh (which is called Christ) : when he is come, he will declare unto us all things. Jesus saith unto her, I that speak unto thee am he."

Now that, I think, is what the title " Christ " means to us. Jesus was consecrated by God, not to lead a revolt of the Jews against the Romans, nor even to found a great and glorious Jewish kingdom of happiness and equity. He was consecrated to reveal God, and the will of God, and so gradually to make the whole world good and happy. That can't be done all at once, because men's hearts have got to be changed ; and there are plenty of people—even among those whom you know—who hold back that perfect kingdom of goodness, by being greedy and selfish. But it is being done ; and all decent people are helping.

IV.—CHRIST AND THE WORLD

Wouldn't it be nice if someone could come into the world and set it all right in a week ! But that sort of thing only happens in a pantomime. The real world moves slowly. But—we may say, as in the fable about Galileo—it *does* move, and it moves forward. There is progress in the world ; and this idea of progress lies at the very heart of Christianity.

Jesus Christ was very wise ; and he saw that no one can make the world right all of a sudden, by a great flare-up. People were full of that idea in his time, and you could hardly talk about the future except in that way (it is now called Apocalyptic language—the style e.g. of the Apocalypse, the Book of Revelation). Whenever our Lord talked about making the world a new and better place, you may be sure his disciples thought of a sudden, supernatural flare-up, and put it all in the Apocalyptic way. People do still. The Parable of the Last Judgment, for instance, is a story told by Christ to show that God judges people by the good they have done, you remember. [*As this is rather a short L., there may be time to read Mt. 25³¹⁻⁴⁰ or more.*] There it is,

with its splendid unmistakable lesson. But, even still to-day, people *will* forget that it is a *parable*; and they will take it as a prediction, foretelling the future; they say that Christ is predicting the end of the world that will come soon in a great crash. They *will* make the old mistake of taking poetry as if it were bald, literal prose—as they did, you remember, about Genesis. When Christ did make up parables about how things would work out in the future, he chose very gradual quiet examples, like the Leaven, and the Grain of Mustard Seed [*Read Mt. 13³¹⁻², and Mk. 4³⁰⁻²: cf. Mk. 4²⁶*].

And he would not let the people make him a Messiah.

Sometimes people say there is no such thing as progress. They are quite wrong, as we said once before. Natural science shows us that there has been progress ever since the earth settled down into a huge round ball (and *that* was progress!): first seaweeds, and shell-fish, and crawling things in the water; then plants beginning on the dry land, and reptiles creeping on to the land; then more highly developed plants and animals; then man, a savage; then the slow civilisation of man. There have been ups and downs sometimes, but things have gone on improving. Then Jesus Christ came and manifested himself; and in manifesting himself he showed us the true character of God, for he is God as well as man.

Jesus is the true Messiah, the Christ of the whole world, the Christ who saves mankind, not by might nor by force but by the Spirit of God.

HIS ONLY SON

This Lesson may well be divided into two, or even three. Indeed Point 5, which deals with a very important subject, ought (even if it is included now) to be given again at some other time as a separate Lesson. It is very useful sometimes to vary matters by having a shorter Lesson than usual.

I.—THE UNIQUE SON

WHEN Philip got into the carriage of the Ethiopian, and talked to him, as they went along, about Jesus, the Ethiopian said he wanted to be baptised [*Ac.* 8³⁶]. And he was baptised. In some Bibles [*A.V. and R.V. Marg.*] there is a sentence put in about what the Ethiopian believed: this sentence was not put in till about a hundred years after [*A.D.* 150, *or earlier*]; so it shows us what was the Creed of the earlier Christians after the time of S. Philip or S. Paul or the Acts. The sentence is “I believe that Jesus Christ is the Son of God.” That is, perhaps, the earliest Creed; and a very good Creed it is too.

But in our Creed, which is a little later, the . . . Apostles', there is a word put in before “Son”—“and in Jesus Christ, his . . .” Yes, “*only*.” Ever so long ago [*L.* 7], we talked about Jesus being the Son of God; and if anyone remembers, he will see why this word “only” was put into the Creed. I wonder if anyone does! It was the Lesson about each of us being made the Child . . . of God, at our . . . Baptism. We said then that all living things were God's children—even the animals. So we said there were four sorts of children. Ah! I wonder who remembers! You do? All right: First . . . the animals. Who will tell me the second?

. . . All men. And the third? . . . Members of Christ's Church, who are children by . . . ? adoption [*If no one knows, an assistant can answer this*]. Christians are *the* children, in a special sense. Then there is the fourth class; but in this class there is only one person . . . We are all sons of God; but Jesus Christ is *the* Son of God. He is the only one in that highest class.

So you see why the word "only" was put in the Creed. He is not merely the best of God's sons: he is *the only* Son. "Well then," you say, "isn't 'only' rather confusing? First you say, 'We are all God's sons'; then you say, 'He is the only Son.'" Yes, "only" is a little confusing, but in modern English we have a better word, which exactly describes it—*unique*. Jesus is the unique Son of God. To say anything is unique means that it is the only one of its kind. When we were talking about water [L. 44] and its peculiar, unique properties, I used the word unique a lot, so as to get you used to it.

II.—THE DODO AND THE PHŒNIX

There was once the skin of a dodo in the Ashmolean collection at Oxford. If it were there still, it would be unique, because the dodo is an extinct bird, and there is no other skin in the world; but in 1755 the authorities had the bright idea of destroying it [*almost incredible, but true*], and nothing is left now but the head and the right foot.

In ancient times everyone believed that there actually was a unique bird, in Arabia, called the Phœnix. It was supposed that there was never more than one in existence. The phœnix was supposed to live five hundred years; then she made a funeral pyre, sang a beautiful tune, and burnt herself to ashes, having first laid a unique egg; and the heat of the burning pyre hatched the egg, and out came a new phœnix, another unique bird. Sometimes you see a picture of the phœnix as an advertisement of a fire-insurance office; because when your house is burnt down, the insurance money makes a new one rise from its ashes. And to say of a lady (as the poets sometimes do), "She is a phœnix among women,"

or "She is alone the Arabian bird" [*Cymbeline* I, 7], means, she is unique, there's no one else of the kind. Now, an early Christian writer, S. Clement of Rome, uses the Greek word for "only-begotten" [μονογένης] of the Phoenix. And this is just the word that is used in the Creed. So we know that "only-begotten" means unique. At first the Latin Creed had *unicus*; but afterwards they altered it to *unigenitus*, which is not so good. So now you see what "His only Son" (τὸν υἱὸν αὐτοῦ τὸν μονογενῆ, *unicum Filium ejus*, or *unigenitum*), or "His only-begotten Son" means.

III.—THE THEOLOGY OF IT

Jesus spoke with unique authority. There was always something about him that made him different from everybody else. He spoke indeed of his disciples as his brothers, and he called God "my Father and your Father, my God and your God" [*Jn.* 20¹⁷]. But all the same they knew he was unique. They said, "He must be the Son of God." And I am sure that if he were to come and talk to us here, though he looked just as he looked when he was on the earth, and wore clothes like ours, you would think, "What a lovely, wonderful man"; and if I whispered, "I think this must be the Son of God," you would say, "Of course, that's what he is!" That seems to me very simple; and I am sure it seemed simple to the disciples.

Of course there is a theology about it. [*This is too difficult for younger classes.*] That is to say, philosophers have thought about it, and the Christian Church has tried to explain it. The explanation is this. God always had an eternal Son, who was part of himself. We compared this once to the radiation from the blazing sun in the sky [*L.* 37, 50]. At the Incarnation this eternal Son of God was perfectly joined to the human nature of Jesus. "Incarnation," you remember, means "becoming flesh," or becoming man. It is a heresy to say that the human being, Jesus, existed eternally with God before he was born; it is also a heresy to say that the Son of God was a separate, secondary or subordinate God who lived with his Father [*Arianism*]. Very many people think like this about it; and as those ideas are

very confusing, it is a comfort to know that they are not the correct explanation. If we want very short words we might rightly say :—Something that is really God took our nature in Jesus ; this is what we call the eternal Son of God. [*The fullness of God, but not the whole of God, came into Jesus. It is a heresy to say that the Trinity was incarnate. God the Father was not incarnate, though the divine fullness came into Jesus.*] Thus Jesus was God and Man, and was the Son of God himself. That is, perhaps, almost too simple ; but it is not far wrong.

IV.—THE LOGOS OR WORD

All this will be easier, and our ideas will get less confused, if we use a distinct name for that part of God, and call him, not the eternal Son of God, but the *Logos*. That is an easy word, and quite clear and distinct. [*T. may now repeat the last paragraph, substituting " Logos " for " Son."*] You see it is easier that way. Now *Logos* is just the Greek for " Word." So when in *John* 1 we read : " The Word was made flesh," it is just the same as " The *Logos* was made flesh," or rather, " became flesh." The *Logos* is that eternal expression of God, that active manifestation of God [*T. throws both his hands forward*] which was the root of the being of Jesus, which was made man in Jesus.

Well, of course to call the *Logos* " the Son of God " is an imperfect description (you remember the word " *inadequate* "), because when we think of a Son we think of someone quite different and separate—as you are from your father—and the *Logos* is not separate from God the Father, nor is he different. He is one with God.

But to call the *Logos* " the Son " helps us a lot in one way. We are all sons of God. We each have some of God's spirit in us ; what is good in us is divine ; God loves us for what is good in us. We can, in fact, only think of God's character from what we know of men. If there were no men we could not imagine God at all. When we try to think of God's perfect goodness we do so by thinking of Jesus Christ. He gives us the idea of God. The Son is like the Father. We can thus think of every baby that is born as a little tiny word of God taking flesh ; and we can think of the birth of Jesus as

the great Word of God, the eternal Logos, taking Flesh. We can think of the eternal Son of God in a perfect human being, loving God and being loved by him. The Logos is no longer just an idea to us. He is the living, lovely Son of God, and we can see him in Jesus Christ. That is why good Christians have such a real, intense, and passionate sense of God.

V.—THE THREE RIGHT THINGS

We did explain about the Logos or Word before [L. 49]. We said that the pure humanity of Jesus was like the white paper of a . . . book, and that the Incarnation was like the Word or thought of God being printed on the paper. For what are words? When you say a word you utter a . . . thought. So words are uttered thoughts: and the Word of God is the thought of God uttered, or going forth, or manifesting itself.

Now men have always felt that certain things are right: (1) Sensible things are right: our intelligent nature feels that. (2) Good things are right: our *moral* nature feels that. (3) Beautiful things are right: what is called our *æsthetic* nature—i.e. our understanding of beautiful things—our *æsthetic* nature feels that. If the God we believe in is the true God, he must satisfy these three spiritual desires in us for Truth, for Goodness, for Beauty. They are our only spiritual desires. There are no others. They show themselves in Science, in Conduct, and in Art.

We can only get all these three things in a Person. You can get beauty in a daisy, but you can't get intelligent wisdom, or moral goodness in a daisy. So men have always rightly craved for a Person, who should reveal these three spiritual qualities; because they must be the divine qualities. And a person for us to see and understand must be a human person.

Jesus Christ is a human person whom we can understand, and he is also the Son of God, the Word uttering the Truth, the Goodness, and the Beauty of God. Our national heroes, and the famous world-heroes, show us something of these three qualities. Jesus Christ shows them all: He is *the* world-hero, the Son of Man and the Son of God.

Men used to long for a great Personality who would satisfy these three great human demands. Our intelligent nature demands that the universe shall have an intelligible sense and unity. Our moral nature demands goodness, justice, love. Our æsthetic nature demands beauty and harmony—all that is in poetry, and art, and nature. At last Jesus came, and satisfied these demands.

S. John really says just that—if we remember that the word “Grace” means goodness *and* beauty (it meant beauty first of all):—“The Word was made [or the Logos became] flesh, and dwelt among us, and we beheld his glory, glory as of the only-begotten of the Father, full of grace and truth” [*Jn.* 1¹⁴]. There you have it all—full of Goodness, Beauty, and Truth.

Some people say they believe that Jesus is God, and yet they think of him as less than a great man, as less than a scientist, less than an artist. They think of him as very good, but less than Isaac Newton or Darwin, less than Michael Angelo, or Shakespeare, or Mozart. If that were so, he would be less than perfect man—and, still more, less than God. But in him is all Beauty and all Truth, as well as all Goodness. He is the unique Son of God, the one Person whom we can fully trust.

OUR LORD

I.—OUR MASTER

IF you feel that our last two or three Lessons have been too difficult to remember, just think of the two words "Our Lord." They are quite simple, and they are enough. Christ is the Lord of all of us. Only, if anyone wants to argue about the more difficult things, just look up your analyses of our last Lessons, before you try to argue back!

Christ is our Lord—we can all remember that. He is not merely "my Lord," any more than God the Father is merely "my Father." We are not selfish: we are all joined together as brothers; and he is the Lord of us all together.

I think there are four ideas in this word "Lord." The first is—guess . . . yes, *Master*. Therefore we have got to try and obey him, to be his faithful soldiers and servants unto our lives' end, which is what was said when the sign of the cross was made on our foreheads at our baptism. We have got to try to do all the good things he told men to do. Especially we have got to be just to others, and gentle, and kind: to think about other people rather than ourselves. We have got to behave decently to other people, and to try to like them. All this is summed up in the word *love*. "This is my commandment, that ye love one another, even as I have loved you" [*Jn.* 15¹²]. "By this shall all men know that ye are my disciples, if ye have love one to another" [*Jn.* 13³⁵]. And by loving one another we shall learn what love is, and then we shall be able to love God [1 *Jn.* 4²⁰] which is the greatest happiness of all.

Once I left two very small boys, aged three and four, in charge of a young girl for the afternoon. She was determined to teach them religion. "They are quite

old enough," she said. When we got back, she was beaming with pride. She made them stand up and repeat to us the theology they had learned. But, poor dears, they had not quite understood, and what they said was, "If you love me, keep my bananas." You laugh; but when I heard them I almost wanted to cry as well: it was so innocent, and pretty, and perverse. And it seemed a kind of parable of the way grown-up people also, and learned men sometimes, *will* misunderstand the plain words of Christ. Afterwards, those boys were reminded of that afternoon's religious instruction, and I think they always remembered that text. Many people never remember it; and it might as well be bananas instead of commandments, for all they care. *You will remember won't you?* Will you love Jesus Christ? There is no one else worthy of love, in the way he is. But if you try to love him, make him your Lord. If you love him, keep his commandments.

II.—OUR LEADER

The second meaning, I think, in "our Lord" is that Jesus is our *Leader*—a leader of volunteers. He is like a great general leading an army of Crusaders against all the evil powers in the world. You know what the old Crusades were that began in the eleventh century. Jerusalem was held by the Seljuk Turks, who charged the poor Christian pilgrims enormous fees before they were allowed into the holy places, and so persecuted them that out of one band of seven thousand pilgrims only two thousand came back alive. That was in the time of William the Conqueror [1066], and his English Secretary [Ingulph] was among that band of pilgrims. In 1094 a poor weak-looking man, who had once been a soldier, went to Jerusalem as a pilgrim; he had a fiery heart, and he was so horrified at what he saw, that when he came back, he travelled up and down Europe, stirring people to rescue the holy city from the infidel. He was called Peter the Hermit, and so wonderful was his passionate eloquence, as he went about giving little crosses to those who volunteered, that all the Western Church was filled with wild enthusiasm. A great army was got together. It was the first time that the people of Europe had united for anything. Because they were soldiers of the cross

and carried crosses, they were called Crusaders. The First Crusade [1097] got to Jerusalem; and after a month's siege they took the holy city. There were several other Crusades, but on the whole they were unsuccessful; and it was not till 1918 that Jerusalem was finally delivered from the Muslims, after nearly thirteen hundred years; and now it is protected by a Christian Power.

I wish I could say that the Crusaders had really taken Christ as their leader in all things: if they had, they would have succeeded, not only in defeating the Seljuk Turks, but in making the whole world into God's Kingdom. But there was much bad mixed with the good, and many bad men who cared nothing for the great idea. Yet it *was* a magnificent idea; and for the first time in history the whole of Europe, outside the Eastern Church, was exalted and united by one common enthusiasm. The Crusades showed what might one day be done.

Now we want a new and finer Crusade. We want to unite all the decent people in the world, who will take Christ as their leader, all the people who believe in self-sacrifice—for that is what the Cross means: we want to unite all our friends, and all the nations of the world, in a new Crusade, to bring everybody into one simple, splendid Faith, to put an end to the horrors and miseries of war, to give freedom and health, understanding and knowledge to all people, so that everyone shall have his fair chance, and to destroy oppression, injustice, cruelty, and vice. It is worth while being a Crusader! Christ has shown us how it can be done; and as soon as we agree to put his teaching in the first place, and not something else, he will be our true leader and he will prevail.

I don't know if anyone remembers; but I once said that all progress has come through men trusting in great leaders. [Trust in human personality is the first condition of progress.] That is the idea; and that is why we want another Crusade, a very sensible one, a very pure and strong one, which shall be really true to the Cross, and a real following of Christ.

III.—OUR PATTERN

The third meaning of "our Lord," I think, is that Christ is our *Pattern*. You remember last time we said

that man has always craved for spiritual things. . . . Yes, Goodness, Truth, and Beauty. Our moral nature demands Goodness, our . . . intellectual nature, Truth, and our . . . æsthetic nature, Beauty. We said that the final, true, and satisfactory religion must reveal these as the character of God ; and that Christianity has produced—far more than any other form of civilisation—Goodness in Morals, Truth in Science, and Beauty in Art. We were thinking of Christ as *the Revelation of God*, i.e. as disclosing or showing God to us.

But human nature is like the Divine nature, and *Christ is also the Revelation of man*. What is true manhood ? People have often asked that. What is it to be a real, true man or woman ? Men are very mixed. We see goodness, love, mercy, justice, strength, temperance. We also see badness, selfishness, cruelty, corruption, weakness, intemperance. Which is manly ? And which at the same time is womanly ? Some cynics and pessimists have said that human nature is necessarily selfish and lustful, cruel and corrupt. But the conscience of mankind protests against such an idea. [*Bishop Gore, " Creed of a Christian," 37.*] Is man then necessarily a mixture—good fouled over with evil ? Can there be such a thing as a real good man ? Must we despair of being decent people ? No, we needn't despair. Human nature *is* fine and good. There can be a good man. There has been a perfectly good man : a real man, who grew up like us, and was tempted like us, and was without alloy of selfishness, or cruelty, or lust. Jesus sets the standard. He shows us that sin is the weakening and spoiling of human nature—that it is *inhuman* [*L. 52*]. He shows us the real glory of mankind.

And do we want to know just what we should try and be like ? Do we want a pattern ? " I want to be a *man*." Here is the right sort of man to be.

IV.—OUR FRIEND

But (4) our Lord is not like an earthly master. The word for " Lord " did not mean anything despotic in Christ's time. *Kyrios* had much the same meaning as in Greece to-day, where you say for " Good day, Sir "—*Kalimera Kyrie mu* ; and Mr. Black is *o Kyrios Black*.

Christ is our *Friend*. "Ye are my friends. . . . No longer do I call you servants . . . but I have called you friends" [*Jn.* 15¹⁴]. He is not a master in the usual sense, because he does not *compel* us; our service is voluntary. The secret of Christianity is that true Christians make friends with Christ, and always have his spirit near them; and these are the Christians who *count*.

There was an old bishop of eighty-six, called Polycarp, in the second century. He was so old that he had known S. John, and he was born about the same time as when the Gospels were written. In the year 155, a persecution broke out. Twelve Christians were arrested in Smyrna, where Polycarp was bishop, and were tortured and brought to the arena; and when they saw the great lions gnashing their teeth and roaring, they were afraid, and one of them, named Quintus, gave up. But the other eleven stuck it, and went bravely into the arena and were torn to pieces. Afterwards, the people fetched the old bishop; and Polycarp came to the arena. The beasts were gone; but the noise of the shouting and yelling was awful. Then over all the din a voice was heard, and the words rang out, "Be strong, Polycarp, and play the man!" And Polycarp stood with his eyes to heaven and his hand waving to the crowd. The proconsul said to him—"Curse Christ!" And the old man looked him straight in the face, and said:—"Four-score years and six have I served him, and he never did me wrong. How then can I revile him now, my King who has saved me?" Then the whole multitude yelled against him, and they cried, "Try a beast on him!" But the games were already over, and it was illegal to fetch out the beasts again, so they tied him to a stake to burn him, and he cried out, "Glory be to God on high": but the flames arched away from him; and they had to call in the executioner to finish him with his knife. "Eighty-six years have I served him!"

The saints are those who have had Christ as a friend. And the final argument for Christianity is that great experience. Thousands have known him intimately and loved him passionately, and thousands now alive do still. They are the people who are very sure of him. And to all of us, though we are but poor servants of his, yet he is our friend.

THE BIRTH OF CHRIST

It is assumed throughout that the class or congregation has already been instructed in the main events of the Life of our Lord at an earlier stage (p. viii), and that the Birth and Death of Christ are explained every year at Christmas and Passiontide. Otherwise this part of the Creed would require a volume to itself.

I.—HISTORY

TO-DAY we come to a part of the Creed which gives us history instead of theology. Of course there is a great deal of theology in it ; but in the main this section—and it is quite a large part of the Apostles' Creed—is a statement of facts, the outline of our Lord's life. And you will notice that it contains two proper names—not only the name of the Virgin Mary, but also that of Pontius Pilate—a name you would never have expected right in the middle of these solemn words. Indeed, people noticed this long ago ; and there is an old proverb—" Pontius Pilate in the Creed ! " A proverb you might quote if you saw the dunce of the school in the sixth form, or a Bolshevik in the House of Lords, or Mr. Squeers addressing a meeting of the Parents' Union, or King Charles II defending the Faith. Well, the main reason is that the authors of the Creed wanted to show that the life of Christ is not like some beautiful fairy-story, but is plain history ; that he was born, and lived, and died, and rose again : that his mother's name was Mary, and that the Roman governor responsible for his death was Pontius Pilate.

There were people among the early Christians, as early as the first century [*Gnostics*], who could not bear to think of Christ as having been a real man who was

really executed. And for a long time there were people who thought of his human life as a kind of make-believe. Besides, most of the world was then heathen, and did not know anything about Jesus Christ at all. So it was a useful thing to have a short outline in the Creed—that he was “conceived by the Holy Ghost, Born of the Virgin Mary, Suffered under Pontius Pilate, Was crucified, dead, and buried, He descended into Hell; The third day he rose again from the dead, He ascended into heaven.” This is the historical part of the Creed—a short outline of the Life about which you have learnt ever since you can remember.

II.—BORN FROM ABOVE

You remember we said a little while ago (L. 55) that the word “Incarnation” means “becoming flesh,” or becoming man. And we said you might put it very simply and roughly by saying that a part of God came into Jesus, and this “part” we call the Logos, that is the Word of God; and “the Son of God” means the same as the Word of God. [*Recapitulate, and explain again, if necessary.*]

Some heretics [*Cerinthus was one*] thought that this happened—that the Word came into Jesus, and became flesh—when our Lord was baptised by S. John. One very curious and interesting heretic [*Marcion*] said that Christ came into the world in the synagogue at Capernaum, when Jesus preached his first sermon there. These were strange notions. They thought that Jesus was an ordinary man till he was about thirty, and then changed into a being rather like the heathen gods were fancied to be, like Mercury, or Mars, or perhaps Hercules. The Creed, on the contrary, says that the Word was in Jesus all through his life: he was conceived by the Holy Spirit. He was not changed into something divine when he began his public ministry, but he was born divine.

Now, we are all the product of humanity; that is to say, we are the product of our parents, and grandparents, and all our ancestors; and the further we go back the more ancestors there are—eight great-grandparents, sixteen great-great-grandparents, then thirty-two, sixty-

four, and so on. So that if you went back a few centuries (when there were far fewer people in England), you would find that all our pedigrees were interlacing with one another. In fact, they say that every one of us includes Charlemagne among his ancestors ; in other words, we are descended from the whole population who had families in Western Europe about the year 800. We are all of high descent—and also of low descent ! We are just the product of humanity. But Jesus Christ was not the mere product of humanity : he was born from above ; he was conceived by the Holy Spirit. It is true that all birth is of the Holy Spirit, and that our bodies are the temples of the Holy Spirit ; but in Christ the Holy Spirit dwelt fully, and caused his human body to exist in its divine perfection. S. Paul says that “ in him dwelleth all the fullness of the Godhead bodily ” [Col. 2⁹] ; and in another sentence, which sums up all this part of the Creed :—“ For it was the good pleasure of the Father that in him should all the fullness dwell ; and through him to reconcile all things unto himself, having made peace through the blood of his cross.” [Col. 1¹⁹] ; and a little earlier he says very beautifully that Christ is “ the image of the invisible God, the first-born of all creation ” [v. 15].

III.—BORN IN THE WORLD

The birth of Christ was the greatest event in human history. Christ was a new creation. When he was born of the Virgin Mary, a new divine force came into the world, though he was born so humbly in a stable, and the world knew him not. We can see it now easily enough, because we can see how much the world has been already changed by his coming, and it is being changed now, and will be far more changed in the future. But for a man like S. Paul, who lived at the beginning, and who had never known him in his earthly life, it must have meant a wonderful insight and faith, and a wonderful spiritual fellowship with his unseen Master, to describe his divine character as no one else has ever done.

Christ was born of Mary. That was an event in history which took place at the beginning of our era [*two or three years before A.D. 1, for our chronology is not*

quite accurate]. Every one knew that who cared to know; but the few who knew *him*, and loved him, knew that he was the Son of God as well as the Son of Man.

As time went on, people began to think of Mary, his mother, also as sinless and unique; and as the centuries passed by, they treated her more and more as a divinity. But really they knew nothing about her except for the few occasions in the Gospels when her name was mentioned. She must have been very good, or God would not have chosen her, we may suppose. But everything else is mere imagination and fancy and legend. [*Mostly taken from three Apocryphal Gospels:—“The Protevangel of James,” “The History of the Nativity of Mary and of the Infancy of the Saviour,” and “The Gospel of the Nativity of Mary,” which was supposed in the Middle Ages to have been written by S. Matthew.*] These legends in old times (e.g. in the thirteenth century) everyone honestly thought to be as true as the Gospels. But the educated world of to-day, on the Continent as well as here, knows that these long stories about S. Mary were all made up. We cannot base a large part of our religion upon mere imagination, nor put fancies in the place of truth. We can love our Lady only as one can love an ideal figure, a person who really existed, and exists now in heaven, but about whom one knows very little indeed. But we ought to recognise that in more primitive and rougher times, the worship of the Blessed Virgin helped enormously to civilise our rude forefathers. It gave them a new respect for women and taught them that love is stronger than brute force. The history of Christianity has been in part the history of the emancipation of women; in a greater part it has been the discovery of the supreme power of gentleness and goodness, and love and self-sacrifice. The veneration of that image of the Mother with her little child in her arms must have helped this development enormously.

IV.—HIS LIFE

So Jesus Christ was born of a woman, born in Bethlehem, a Hebrew, brought up in Nazareth, where the people were partly Jewish, partly Syrian, and partly Greek. Of humble birth, he was brought up in a work-

ing-man's home : his native tongue was Aramaic, but he certainly knew Hebrew and he probably knew Greek. He lived quietly at home till he was about thirty. Then he began his public ministry which lasted about three years. The great purpose of his life was to do the will of God, and he "went about doing good" wherever he was. He had an amazing sense of the nearness of God ; he saw the character of God so clearly, and he was in such perfect harmony with his Father, that he was able to show the world once for all that God is love.

There was a quiet gentleness, and a quick sympathy in him always, and he was very calm, full of dignity, but sometimes also his great heart burst forth passionately. He was always sincere, and he did what he knew to be right, not caring what happened to him. He never tried to get on in the world, or to become a grand person, as his followers hoped ; but just gave himself up to the service of God [*L.* 50].

So enemies grew up around him, especially among leaders of the Church which he had come to reform. They watched him more and more closely till their chance came.

THE DEATH OF CHRIST

Some teachers will prefer to make more than one Lesson on this subject. It can easily be divided into two Lessons ; or into three, since the Parables mentioned in Point VI would alone provide a full Lesson.

I.—HOW HE DIED

THE enemies of Jesus got their way at last. He went on, fearlessly, into the mouth of danger. They took him prisoner. He was tried. Pontius Pilate, a Roman official, despising the superstitions of the Pharisees and priests, was strongly moved when he saw the Prisoner and spoke with him ; but he did not persist in his effort to save him, so that it was “under Pontius Pilate” that Jesus suffered. Every Passiontide—the last fortnight in Lent—and especially in Holy Week and on Good Friday, we try to think of how he suffered, and how nobly he met his death upon the Cross. He had spent his life in doing the will of God, and in preaching the Kingdom of God, and in hallowing the name of God ; and now at the end he was “obedient unto death, even the death of the Cross.” [*Phil.* 2⁸.]

He had preached the Kingdom of Heaven, he had taught his disciples to pray that the Kingdom might come on earth, and God’s will be done ; and now he died a martyr, he died that the Kingdom might come. All the four Gospels give us a long account of the Passion—that is, his suffering—and of his long six hours’ agony upon the Cross ; and we can read in those accounts, so quietly told, of his gentleness, his courage, and his strange unearthly dignity in all that humiliation ; and how he prayed for those who were torturing him, as they nailed his hands to the Cross.

No wonder that the heathen men who afterwards heard that story for the first time, from age to age, were deeply moved. "I wish I had been there," said one barbarian chief, "with a handful of my brave fellows!"

But that life was not to be saved by any violence, even of the bravest. "He saved others," the priests said, mocking him, as he hung on the Cross, "himself he cannot save." [*Mk.* 15³¹.] He had given his life to saving others, but he would not save himself. He gave up his life for the world.

II.—THE POWER OF THE CROSS

Ever since the first Good Friday, men have thrilled to that glorious death. They have felt that the sacrifice of the Cross is the central fact of the world's history, and that from the Cross comes the healing of all the nations. Sometimes, no doubt, they have almost half-forgotten the Life that went before that Death; and we should always remember that it is the whole Life that is of such eternal importance. Christ's whole life was a sacrifice, and his death was just the perfect end to the life, and was part of it. He gave himself up for the whole world, living and dying: that was his sacrifice. And the world sees all the life in the death, and is drawn to it: "I, if I be lifted up, will draw all men unto me." [*Jn.* 12³².]

I think all the missionaries who converted Europe must have preached the Cross—"Jesus Christ and him crucified," as S. Paul said [*1 Cor.* 2²]. It took fourteen hundred years to convert all Europe to Christianity. The rate was far slower than in India or China at the present day. But it was done; and I think that the missionaries always began with the same message—S. Paul's message, "We preach a Messiah crucified." [*1 Cor.* 1²³.] We know from the Venerable Bede [*"Ecclesiastical History," Bk. I, cap. 25*] that when Augustine landed in Kent [A.D. 597], to convert our own Anglo-Saxon forefathers, he and his followers approached King Ethelbert with a silver cross for their banner and the image of our Lord and Saviour painted on a board, and I think that image was a crucified one. (Many centuries after this, people began to make very dreadful-

looking tortured crucifixes ; and, later still, to hang them about everywhere. But Christians in the time of Gregory and Augustine still showed great reverence and reserve in representing the crucified Redeemer.) Bede does not tell us what Augustine said, but he gives us King Ethelbert's cautious but very generous reply :—
 " Your words and promises are very fair, but as they are new to us, and of uncertain import, I cannot approve of them so far as to forsake that which I have so long followed with the whole English nation. But because you have come from far . . . to give us what you believe to be true and beneficial, we will not molest you, but will give you good entertainment . . . nor do we forbid you to preach and gain as many as you can to your religion."

I like to imagine that Augustine said something like this, which was made up a few years ago when the whole scene was acted as a play. The Frankish interpreter translates Augustine's sermon, as they stand by the silver cross and the picture, with the other Christians round, before the king :—

" He saith there is one God and only one
 Almighty, ageless, boundless. This is he
 Who maketh man, the world, the universe.
 He saith, moreover, that this only God,
 Mighty and terrible, is mighty too
 In goodness, greater than a father's care,
 And deeper than a mother's tenderness.
 That God is love—and that this truth from heaven,
 Was brought by Jesus Christ, God's Son, God's self,
 Perfect in every human excellence,
 And therefore liketh God. He came to earth,
 Lived simply, as ye know ; and then he died,
 Thus : (*pointing to the picture*)
 as ye know full well, upon the Cross.
 So did the tender-hearted Jesus by his throes
 Redeem this sinful world, and open wide
 The fellowship of heaven to all believers."

I think most missionaries at the present day preach a gospel something like that. Ethelbert and his men were converted. It was the Gospel of the Cross that converted the whole of England and the whole of Europe.

III.—THE ATONEMENT

This mysterious power over men's hearts of the Death of Christ may be called the Atonement. The Atonement is not mentioned in our Creed [*though it may be said to be implied in the Nicene Creed*], nor was it actually part of the teaching of Christ, so far as we know. But it describes the whole work of Christ. And it has been, one of the things which men have thought most about and written about, since the second century; and at some periods it has seemed the one central doctrine of Christianity.

IV.—WRONG IDEAS

The Atonement is much too difficult and vast a subject for me to try and explain here. The truth is, there have been all kinds of theories about it, and some of them have been very strange theories indeed. For instance, S. Irenæus in the second century, taught that the Death of Christ was a ransom paid by God to the Devil, and this continued to be the leading theory for nearly a thousand years. The Devil had got hold of men; and in order to buy him off, God gave his Son up as a ransom. That seems to us a very childish idea. But some other ideas were worse. You see, men felt so strongly that somehow Christ had saved them by his death; and they thought and thought about it and made up one theory after another. And they found it very hard to understand that God is entirely good, and that God is love. So they were always falling back into the idea of God as like the kings they saw in the world—arbitrary, tyrannical, and cruel.

Some of these ideas have survived to the present day. Some people think still that God was so angry with the world that nothing but the sight of Christ's blood upon the Cross could appease him. You see, the old ideas of blood-sacrifice still hang about: people used to kill animals (and even men) in order to put their gods in a good temper. [*It seems best, in view of the complexity of the subject, to put down a crude example of what is still common in popular theology, and to leave it at that, so that the young people may have that amount of warning. See also L. 37, Pt. I.*]

So when you hear anyone talking about salvation by blood, or about our being washed in blood, that our sins may be forgiven, just remember that phrases like this can only be true in what is called a mystical sense. They are not meant literally. They are not phrases used by Christ himself, though it is of course true that he shed his blood for us [as is stated in the first Gospel, Mt. 26²⁸]; but they are an attempt to express in mystical or metaphorical language the salvation which Christians feel that Christ has brought to their souls. [*It is difficult to use simpler words; but they will understand perhaps well enough.*] To the ancient Jews the blood meant the life of any living creature [*Deut. 12²³, etc.*]; and phrases about blood were familiar and intelligible to the first Christians, who were used to blood-sacrifices, and who used the word symbolically to explain why the old sacrifices were abolished. Unfortunately, unimaginative or ignorant people often use such phrases in a literal kind of way, and thus bring their religion into disrepute.

The wrong ideas are partly due to people thinking there are three separate Gods, who can make arrangements with one another. This is called Tritheism [*L. 37*]. And partly they are due to people attributing diabolical characteristics to God—thinking of him as almost like a devil [*L. 39*]. This may be called devil-worship, or diabololatry. So, if you hear any very wrong description of the Atonement, you can say: “My dear friend, that is really Tritheistic Diabololatry.” [*Perhaps to put it that way will help them to remember that there are mistaken ideas still widely current outside theological circles. It is of great importance that they should be warned.*]

V.—ATONEMENT IS RECONCILIATION

But we must not think that, because men have made up wrong explanations, the doctrine of the Atonement is unimportant. It really puts in one word the whole idea of Christ’s redeeming work. Atonement is really “at-one-ment,” and it means that in Christ man is made at one with God. Men felt that when Christ gave up his life upon the Cross, he was sacrificing himself for the whole world; they felt that *they* were made better men by this sacrifice, and that it moved

them to give up their sins and repent ; they felt also that God must be pleased at the sight of such a perfect life, closed by such a perfect sacrifice. They were right. It was only their theories about it that were often wrong.

The other word for Atonement is the beautiful word *Reconciliation*. Only we must not think that God needed to be reconciled to us. He always loved us just the same. It was man who needed to be reconciled to God.

S. Paul put this into one perfect sentence, which you ought to know by heart, because it contains the whole true Doctrine of the Atonement. So write it down. "God was in Christ, reconciling the world unto himself." [2 Cor. 5¹⁹. *Repeat and explain.*] There is the whole truth of the Incarnation and the Atonement in one short sentence.

VI.—FORGIVENESS AND THE CROSS

Our Lord never taught that men are forgiven through the Cross or by his blood. He taught that God is an impartial loving Father, who forgives men when they repent. He taught this in the parables of the Lost Sheep, the Unmerciful Servant, the Prodigal Son, the Pharisee and the Publican. He gave only one condition :—"If ye forgive men their trespasses, your Heavenly Father will also forgive you" [Mt. 6¹⁴]. He repeated this several times, and he put it into the Lord's Prayer . . .

Forgiveness, he taught, follows at once upon repentance. And he taught that we shall be judged according to our works—our behaviour. "Not every one that saith unto me, Lord, Lord, shall enter into the Kingdom of Heaven, but he that doeth the will of my Father which is in heaven" [Mt. 7²¹].

One man can sacrifice himself for others. Christ sacrificed himself for the whole world ; and by this he brought a new hope, a new light, a new goodness into the world. He turns our hearts, and we are sorry for our sins, and we want to be better, and more Christian. He reconciles us to the Father. He makes Atonement.

AFTER DEATH

I.—THE HIDDEN PLACE

THEN the Creed goes on to say that he really died : it was not like some god pretending to die, or seeming to die ; but he really died a human death. He tasted of death, as we all shall. And he was really buried : his body was laid in a tomb cut out of a rocky hill-side, and a stone was rolled before the entrance.

Then "he descended into hell." This sentence is only in the Apostles' Creed, and not in the Nicene Creed. Does "hell" mean anything bad ? . . . No. The word has been misused for centuries ; but really it only means "the hidden place" : it comes from an old root "*hel*" which meant "to hide" or to cover. In Devonshire a man who puts tiles on a roof is still called a "hellier," that is, one who *covers* the roof. In the Latin, this clause of the Creed is [*"descendit ad inferos"*]—"he descended into the lower regions." So "hell" just means the place where men go after death (or the condition into which they change when they die), the place of departed spirits, the next world. Another word for it, which we find in the Greek testament, is *Hades*.

What do we know about *hades* or *hell* ? Very little. Science has discovered such wonderful things about this present world, that some scientific men are now trying to discover things about the next world as well. There is no reason why this should be impossible, for the next world must be very near to us (indeed "next" is the short for "nighest" or "nearest") : and we know it is only our fleshly bodies which prevent us from seeing it. Our bodies are like a curtain which hides the next world, and that is why it is the *hell*—or "hidden"

world. Shakespeare puts this idea in three great lines in *The Merchant of Venice* (v, 1):—

“Such harmony is in immortal souls ;
But whilst this muddy vesture of decay
Doth grossly close it in, we cannot hear it.”

If scientific men do succeed in such investigations of the next world, and prove them, this will be greater than any other discoveries that have ever been made ; but research of this kind is very difficult and requires the greatest care—else people will be only filling themselves with delusions. In the Middle Ages, men’s minds *were* filled with delusions, because elaborate descriptions had been invented of purgatory, and hell (in the bad sense), and of heaven too, which still float about in many peoples’ minds, and give them untrue and often horrible ideas of the next world.

II.—PARADISE

Our Lord was very silent about the next world. He seems to have foreseen that, if he spoke, his words would only be misunderstood and distorted—as indeed the few words he did speak were, not so very long afterwards.

But, just when he was dying upon the Cross, he did say one thing. To the penitent thief he said where he was going, and he used more beautiful words than those in the Creed. The thief in his agony said, “Jesus, remember me when thou comest into thy kingdom.” I suppose he meant “when you come into heaven.” Our Lord did not promise that ; but he answered that something would happen that very day. “Verily I say unto thee, To-day shalt thou be with me in Paradise” [*Lk.* 23⁴³]. Therefore the words, “he descended into hell,” should really mean the same as “he went into Paradise.” I think they really do, because that is what our Lord said about it himself. [*The Jews believed in a lower as well as a heavenly Paradise. S. Paul in the continuation of the passage quoted below makes Paradise synonymous with the “third heaven.” There is naturally discussion as to whether Christ’s words refer to the lower or the higher state. T. would only make confusion by referring to this ; and it is more reasonable to suppose that Christ used the word quite simply, according to his wont,*

and meant the next world, without implications as to a higher or lower.]

Paradise originally meant a park or garden ; and this idea of the next world being like some beautiful garden was certainly that of the early Christians ; for there are many pictures of theirs still to be seen to-day in the Catacombs where so many were buried. These pictures generally represent their dead friends as being in a flowery garden. They never made pictures of horrible places like the purgatory, which was invented in later ages.

III.—DIFFERENT STAGES

Both Jews and Christians held the idea that there were seven heavens. The Epistle to the Hebrews speaks of Christ as passing " through the heavens," one after the other [*He. 4*¹⁴], as " made higher than the heavens " [*He. 7*²⁶] ; and S. Paul says that his spirit was once caught up as high as " the third heaven " [*2 Cor. 12*²]. So the general belief was that above " hell " or Hades or Paradise (whichever we may call it), there were many heavens, till you came to the highest of all (and bad places below, as well ; only we are not thinking about them to-day, but of only of where Christ went). It all sounds a little vague ; but it is so much better to be vague than to think you know things when you don't.

Perhaps I am over-confident, and ought myself to be more vague : but I think we may suppose something like this :—Death is only a change into a more real kind of life. When good people die, they find themselves strong and happy, with a strange new power ; and surrounded by friends. And they don't want to come back into their poor, sick bodies again. There they learn all the good things which God has to teach them ; and as they learn, they rise into higher spheres. Christ said once : " In my Father's house are many mansions " [*Jn. 14*²]. The word " mansions " does not mean big houses with flats, but *resting-places* on the heavenly journey.

Do remember that. So many people think that by " many mansions " Christ meant that there are different kinds of nice houses in heaven, and that some people have finer houses than others. That would be very like this present world ! What he meant was that there

would be room for all ; and " mansion," both in Greek and Latin, meant, originally, an abiding place ; the *mansions* were especially the " stations " or rest-houses on the great Roman roads, where travellers found refreshment [*from* *maneo*. *The Greek* *μοναί*, *similarly comes from μένω, to abide or stay*].

We pray for the departed because they are alive—more alive than we are—and because we think of them making progress, perhaps in Paradise, perhaps already in the heavens. And we feel sure that they pray for us too, and love to think of us making progress here in this lower world of ours. For *this* world is really the lower region.

So then Christ, after he died, was in the place of departed spirits until his resurrection. And we have no reason to suppose that this was anything but a good place. We have only to think of it as a place in different stages, some higher than others ; and that good people pass out of it into the still higher places, the " many mansions." What does " mansions " mean ? Not big houses, but . . . *resting places*, the resting places, or dwelling places, as men pass through the heavens.

IV.—AN OLD TRADITION

Sometimes, in old pictures or sculpture, you may see Christ represented as descending with a banner in his hand, into an underground cavern and there overcoming the Devil and chaining him up, and rescuing the good people who had lived in Old Testament times. This, of course, was a make-up story. It was got from a book called " The Gospel of Nicodemus " [fourth century]. But the belief that Christ when he went into the next world, helped those who had lived before his time, seems a sensible one. This may be the meaning of the words, " he went and preached unto the spirits in prison," but we are not at all sure. [*T. had better not build upon 1 P. 3¹⁹, and 4⁶, because the passages are obscure, and scholars have held very different opinions about their meaning.*] In very early times [S. Ignatius, A.D. 115, S. Justin Martyr, 150], Christians believed that Christ went and helped the Prophets, and other good people of old time, in the next world ; and this

does seem a nice idea, doesn't it? It brings Christ into connection, not only with those who lived after him, and those who are alive now, and those who will live in the future, but also with those who lived before he came into the world.

Naturally, we can know hardly anything about it all. But this we can be sure of: our Lord died a human death, he then passed into that stronger kind of life which we shall all pass into when we die. Does it not seem likely that in those hours he brought a new light into the next world, and showed that the Gospel of love is universal for all mankind? I think—don't you?—that when he passed into that next world, the world that is hidden from us, he still went about doing good.

THE GOSPEL OF CHRIST

(A REVISION)

INTRODUCTION : A.—THE GOOD NEWS

WE said a little while ago that there are really three parts at least in the History of our Lord—not only his Birth and his Death, but also his Life. There is also a fourth part—not only how he lived, but what he taught. And this Teaching of Christ is most important. What would his beautiful life have been to us, if his teaching had been wrong? So the fourth part is the teaching; but, as it was much more wonderful than mere education, men give it a special name, and call it the Gospel of Christ. You know what “Gospel” means? . . . Yes, Good News. And the Greek for that is *Evangel*: so the Gospel of Christ is the same as real evangelical Christianity. It is not the same as the Creed; for the Creed is what we Christians think about God, and about Christ, and about the work of the Spirit of God: but the Gospel is what Christ taught to men.

B.—PROPORTION

It is very important to know the special things that Christ taught. Because then we shall always put these things first, and other things in their proper but less important place. Most of the mistakes men have made, in religion as well as in other matters, have been due to their not putting the first things first, but putting second, or third, or fourth things in their place. We call this a want of proportion. To be very keen about kindness to animals and not at all keen about kindness

to human beings is a want of proportion. Is it important to be kind to animals? . . . Yes, enormously. But it is still more important to be kind to human beings. [*T. will probably have a topical illustration in current affairs.*] So then, many things about religion are very important; but the *most* important is the Gospel of Christ.

C.—TABLES

Four parts in the History of Christ, we said. Have you got them down? Let us put them in chronological order:—

1. The Birth of Christ.
2. The Life of Christ.
3. The Gospel of Christ.
4. The Death of Christ.

It is very useful to know a few of the most important things by number, in a table like this. Do you remember how we said there were three right things, three spiritual activities, three things—and no more—which men rightly desire. They were? . . . 1. Goodness; 2. Truth; 3. Beauty. There is another useful table for you.

Now it will be of enormous value if we can pick out the principal teachings of Christ, and tabulate *them*. Can we? I think we can. I think the learned men who know most about the New Testament would agree if I were to say that the Gospel of Christ can be divided into five main doctrines or teachings.

We have talked a good deal about them all, and they will come up again, especially two, as you will see when we get further on in the Creed [*The Church; the Communion of Saints; the Life Everlasting*]. So we need not take much time about them to-day, but just write them down. When you are older, and you hear people discussing Christianity, you will find they are generally much confused about what Christianity is: but if you remember this table, you will not be confused, because you will have it all clear in your mind.

To make it quite clear, we will begin fresh numbers in ordinary numerals [*T. points to the black-board*].

I.—THE FATHERHOOD OF GOD

(Lessons 4, 27, 36-9)

Christ, as we have so often said, took away all the imperfect, and wrong, and cruel ideas about God, or about many gods, which men had; and taught the world that God is love, and the wise and loving Father of all mankind.

2.—THE BROTHERHOOD OF MAN

(Lessons 5, 6, 7; and in Vol. III)

Christ taught that because God is our Father, all men of whatever race, or colour, or class, or creed are brothers, and that it is our duty to treat all men as we should like them to treat us; to love, and help, and honour all men.

3.—THE KINGDOM OF HEAVEN

(Lessons 9-12)

Christ taught that the one treasure worth having, and the chief thing to pray and work for, is what is called the Kingdom of God, or the Kingdom of Heaven. People found this difficult to understand, and have generally forgotten about it ever since the time of Christ. The Kingdom of Heaven means the sovereignty of God: it is where God rules, or, rather, *when* God rules. It is something that is already here, and yet which is to come, like the sun rising at dawn. Each of those three supreme activities belongs to it; for it is the Kingdom of . . . Goodness; the Kingdom of . . . Truth; the Kingdom of . . . Beauty. Saints show its goodness; philosophers and men of science show its truth; and artists and musicians show its beauty.

4.—HEALTH (i.e. SALVATION)

(Lessons 29 and 50, Pt. I)

This has also been much misunderstood, and the word "Salvation" is still generally misused. People think of it as meaning "Saved from hell," and they

sometimes add something about blood (the blood of Jesus), which shows that they have still some of those barbarous notions of the Atonement [*L. 58, Pt. 4*] in their heads [*partly due to a bald misunderstanding of rabbinical metaphors in S. Paul*]. But we must not allow the grand word "Salvation" to be misused. It means the finest kind of . . . *Health*. Think of the other words that have the same meaning as Salvation :— "Sound, well, safe, unhurt, whole, hale, healed, healthy, holy"—the last five are all forms of the same Old English word [*hal*], as you can guess by their sound. . . . Well, of course you are saved from hell if you are whole and holy !

People used to think that sin came from the evil one, but that sickness came from God. But our Lord showed that sickness as well as sin come from evil ; and he spent his time not only in healing people's spirits (sinful people), but also in healing their minds (mad people), and in healing their bodies (sick people). So Salvation means . . . *Health*, in . . . body, . . . soul, and . . . spirit. He preached *Health* to the world, all his life, and by all he did.

5.—ETERNAL LIFE

(*Lessons 44, 59 ; and in Vol. III*)

The fifth thing which we can be sure was an important part of the Gospel of Christ is Eternal Life. We said a little last time about this, and shall come to it again later in the Creed. So now we will just say : Christ taught that the good life is eternal, above time altogether [*we cannot explain this now*], and above all imperfection. Death is not an end of life, but a new beginning. Death is only a change. There is no loss in dying, but gain every way. Death is a change into a far finer kind of life. All Christians have believed in the immortality of the soul, because our Lord taught us about the Eternal Life ; and for this heavenly consummation we live and hope.

" There lust and lucre cannot dwell ;
 There envy bears no sway ;
 There is no hunger, heat, nor cold,
 But pleasure every way."

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